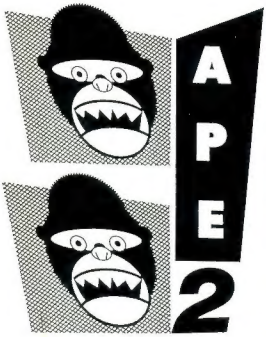
ISSN 0712-7774

$2.25USA • $2.75CANADA • £1.25UK

CEREBUS WORLD TOUR

SAN JOSE
CALIFORNIA
MAY 14, 1995



(see back cover for details)

CEREBUS mothers & daughters 43

193
APR

UNPROOFED

(Make that 'Unproofed and Annotated'. Events will probably make this entire piece an exercise in futility — seeing as it was written before Marvel's announcement that Heroes World would deal exclusively in Marvel 'product' and has been annotated the week before DC's big retailer meeting. Anyway:)

Well, Marvel has fired the first shot. There is every possibility that the Matt Ragone letter from the June *Sales to Astonish* catalogue is actually just a combination 'trial balloon' and 'warning shot fired across the bow'. *(right up until the March 2nd announcement, I was convinced that Marvel had to have SOME kind of more complicated plan in mind. Alas, no. They really do think this is a good idea for them. Stupid, stupid, stupid)* It is not being perceived that way so, effectively, the war has begun. *(it is a sign of how stupid a move this is on their part that all of the initial descriptions involve Marvel 'pulling out of the direct market'. They aren't even bright enough to 'spin doctor' the assessment)* Diamond Comic Distributors is working on an exclusive deal with DC and will be negotiating with the other publishers in descending order of market share. What the Image partners choose to do (exclusive with Diamond, exclusive with Capital, sell to everybody) with their seventeen percent of the market will decide who lives, who dies, who gets bigger, who gets smaller.

Yawn.

At the retail level, everyone now has to buy from at least two distributors. Possibly three. If Marvel keeps their trade terms the same, they will take a substantial hit in their sales (the retailers are in an ugly mood). If they attempt to stuff unsaleable comics down retail throats with larger minimums or package plans, they are going to take an *enormous* hit in their sales. No consultation is being done with the retail community. Terms have been dictated for the New World Order by Marvel. By the time you read this Diamond and DC (and Dark Horse if anyone invites Richardson to the party; he's sitting by his phone) might be sending out their own stone-tablet-faxes; 'Thou shalt order many Vertigo titles'. Retailers, as the community that works the hardest and takes the largest risks, are going to take a dim view of this paternalistic arrogance. There is no awareness of this mood on the publisher/distributor Olympus. Historically speaking, if the retailers feel you are 'sticking it to them' they will 'stick it to you'. The anticipated casualties, as fellow retailers are driven out of business, will increase the survivors' outrage. Their revenge will be economic, not vocal.

As self-publishers, the retailers are our natural allies. It is the task of every self-publisher in every geographic location in North America to make clear that we share the goal of fair treatment and fair play, that the comic-book marketplace and the comic-book medium are not up for grabs as the spoils of corporate warfare. We will lend whatever meager assistance we can in assuring that our work is available to those who are interested in purchasing it at the retail and consumer level. Aardvark Vanaheim dealt exclusively with Sea Gate Distributors before Diamond or Capital City existed. *(issues 16 to 24. Someone finally told me that most stores wouldn't deal with Sea Gate. Sure enough, when we pulled out of the arrangement, we lost Sea Gate as a distributor — and our circulation went up twenty percent)* The eradication of Sea Gate as a player in the direct market they were instrumental in founding was due, in no small part, to their arrogance and greed and the mistaken belief that they were irreplaceable. Sea Gate lost touch with the retail, publishing and consumer communities — came to believe that they were larger than the demand that they serviced, larger than the medium from which they derived their livelihood, larger than the vision which informed the work of Jack Kirby and the other creative giants of the field.

We are poised on the brink of a black day in the history of our medium. Where economics supersede freedom, where expediency supersedes prudence, where greed supersedes wisdom the only result, as was the case with Sea Gate is the inevitability of self-immolation.

The medium will endure. We are only its custodians with proscribed roles within its confines as creators, publishers, distributors, retailers and customers. The medium clearly favours a level playing field, fair play and fair treatment and deals harshly with those who violate these basic values.

As self-publishers, Gerhard and I will continue to write, draw and publish *Cerebus*. The only appropriate response to naked aggression and greed is productivity, reliability and the adherence to the principles of a level playing field, fair play and fair treatment.

We would strongly urge others to do the same.

A level playing field, fair play and fair treatment are not lost causes. They are, cumulatively, the only cause.

Those who lose sight of this basic truth will, inevitably, suffer the same fate as Sea Gate Distributors. They will, inevitably, be the instruments of their own destruction.

(my best advice to self-publishers is still to write and draw your book, publish on time, sell to stores and distributors who are paying you, cut off the ones who aren't and forget about trying to predict the future. You'll do fine)

CEREBUS

NO. 193 **APRIL 1995**

DAVE SIM
Creator, Writer, Characters/ pencil & ink, lettering

GERHARD
Background Artist/pencil & ink, cover colourist, mechanical tones

CAROL WEST
Administrative Assistant

LINDA BERZINS
Typesetting

DIANA SCHUTZ
Proofreading

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS
a novel

•

BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 151 to Cerebus 162)
Flight

•

BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 163 to Cerebus 174)
Women

•

BOOK THREE
(Cerebus 175 to Cerebus 186)
Reads

•

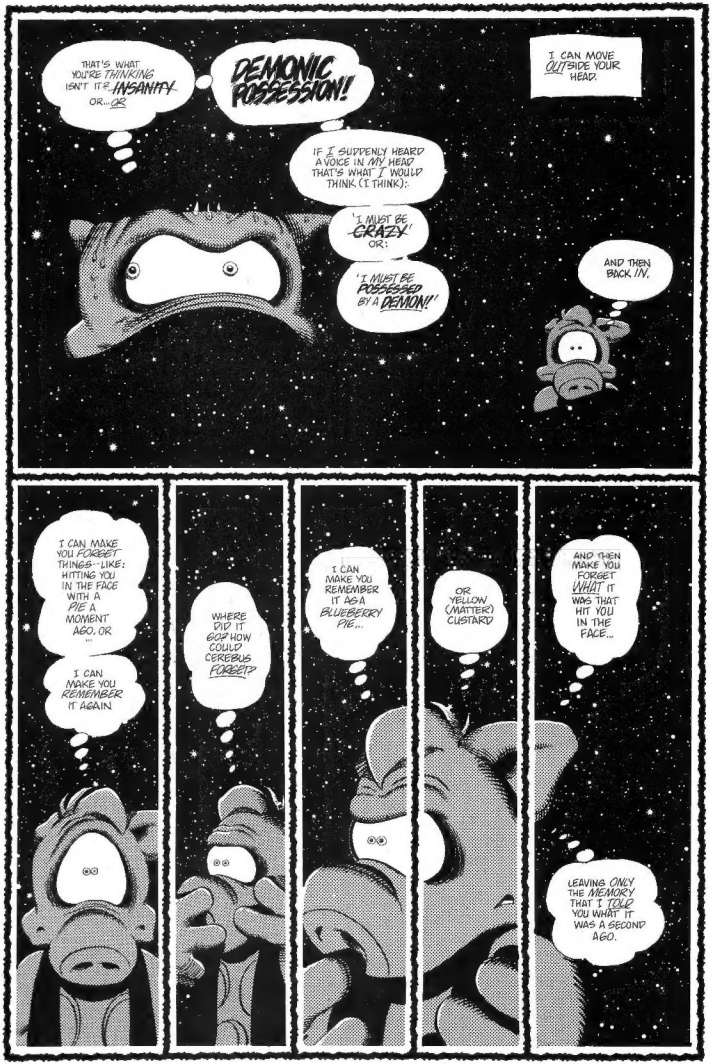
BOOK FOUR
(Cerebus 187 to Cerebus 200)
Minds

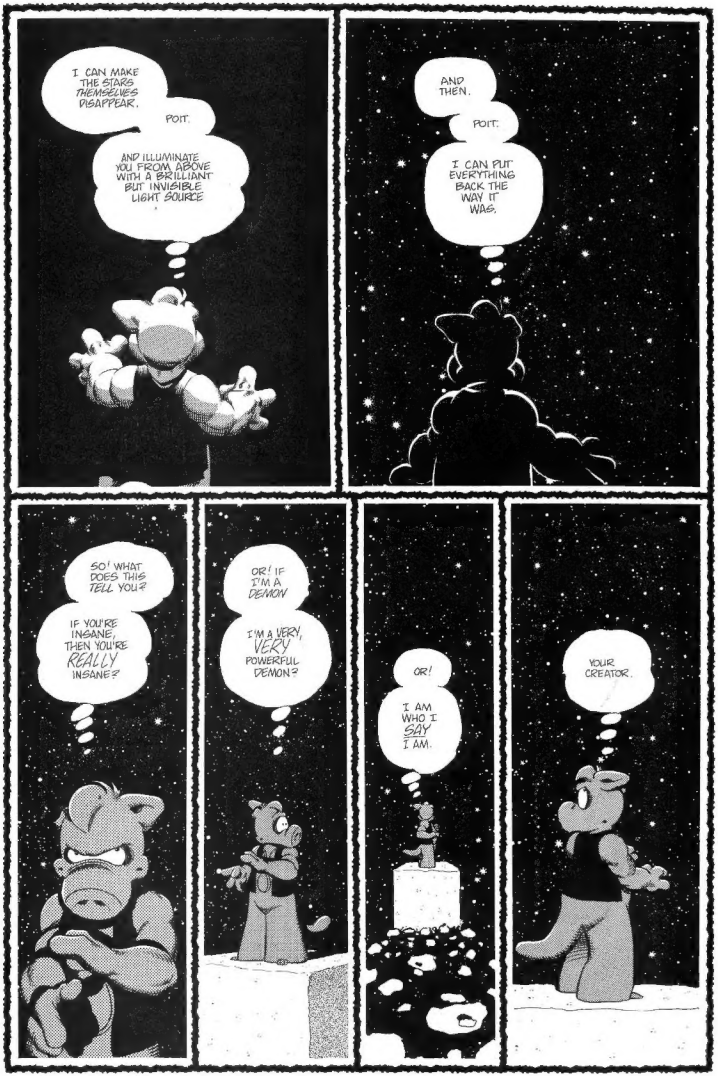
MONTHLY

ALL CONTENTS ©1995 DAVE SIM AND GERHARD

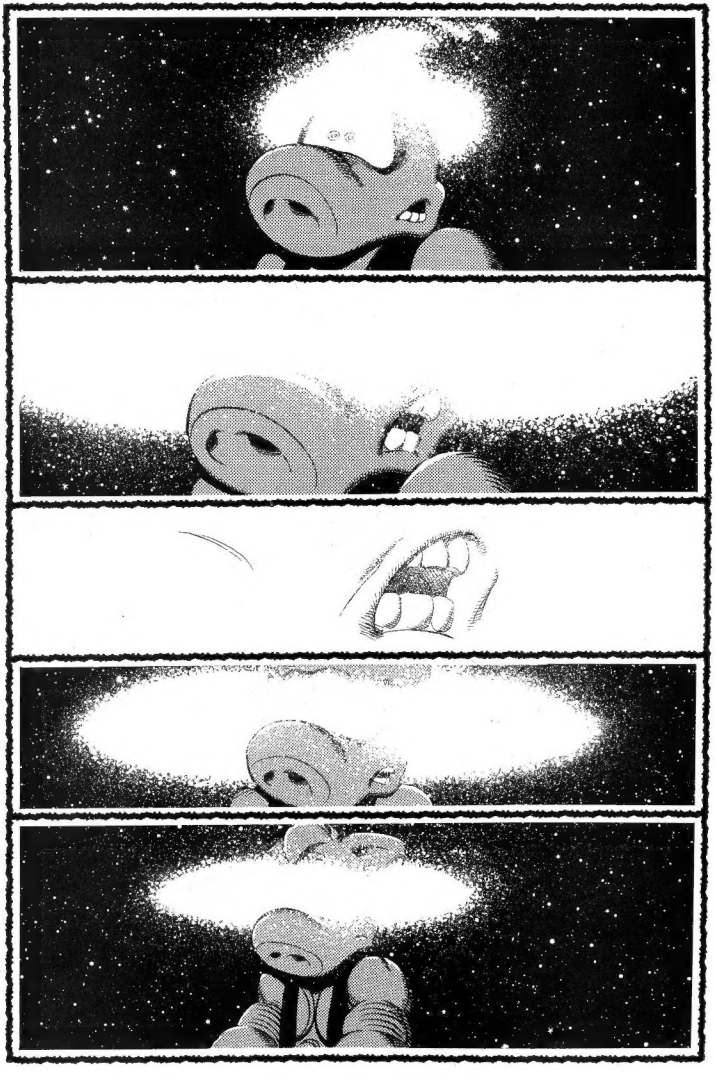
PRINTED IN CANADA by PRENEY PRINT & LITHO, WINDSOR, ONTARIO

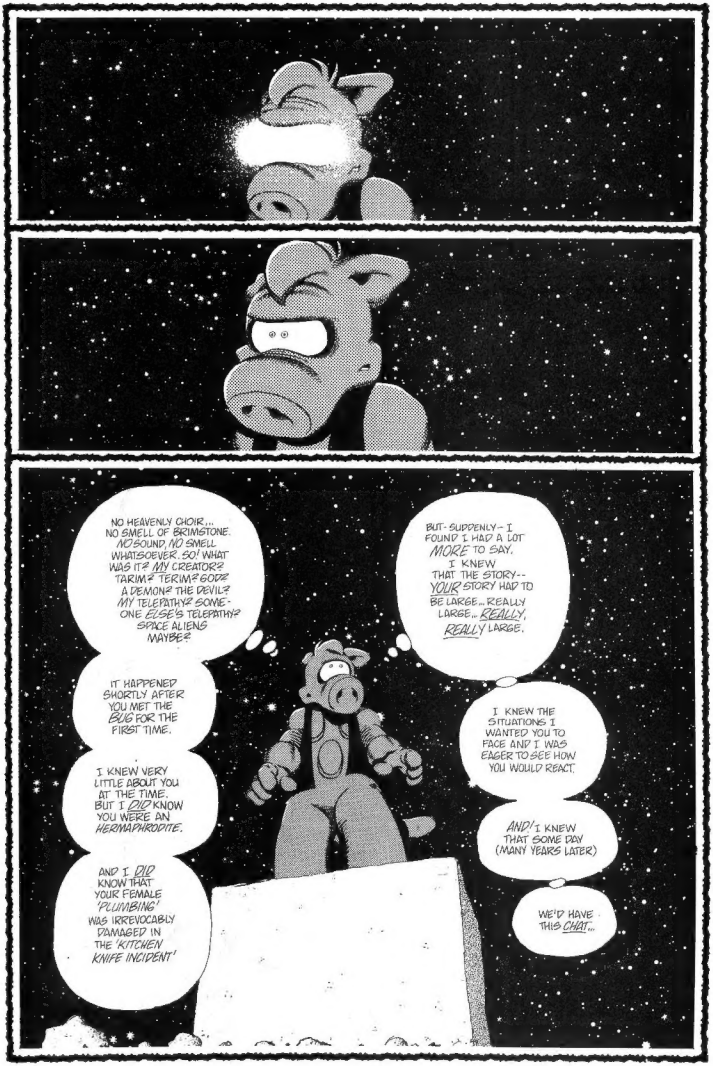
SEE -- THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR 'BAKER AND BREAD' ANALOGY IS THAT I'M NOT THE BAKER AND YOU'RE NOT THE BREAD.
YOU'RE THE BAKER AND YOUR LIFE IS THE BREAD...
TARIM?
SIGH. I KNOW YOU MUST GET TIRED OF HEARING THIS, BUT -- NO. I'M NOT TARIM.
I AM YOUR CREATOR -- BUT GIVEN THAT NO CREATOR KNOWS WHERE HIS IDEAS COME FROM, EVEN THAT'S A SHAKY PREMISE.
MAYBE I'M SOMEONE'S CREATION AS YOU'RE MY CREATION ... MAYBE MY CREATOR HAS NO IDEA WHERE I CAME FROM.
OR MAYBE.
MAYBE HE'S JUST A VOICE IN MY HEAD.
OF COURSE
HEARING VOICES
IS A SIGN OF INSANITY

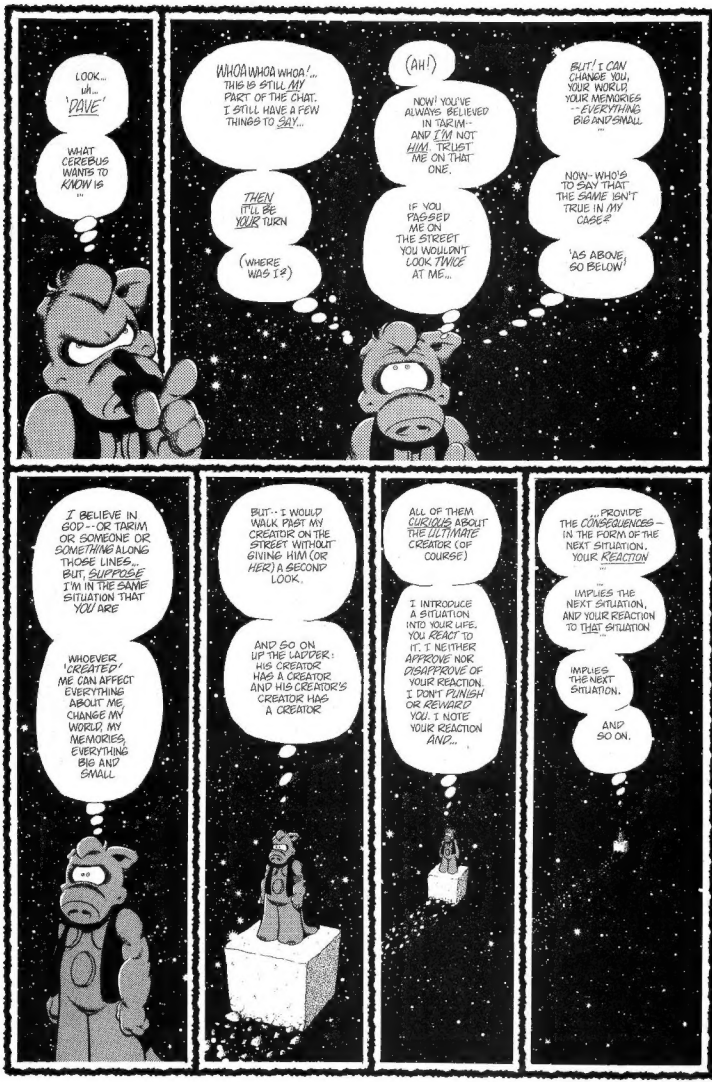

THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE THINKING ISN'T IT? INSANITY OR... OR
DEMONIC POSSESSION!
I CAN MOVE OUTSIDE YOUR HEAD.
IF I SUDDENLY HEARD A VOICE IN MY HEAD THAT'S WHAT I WOULD THINK. (I THINK):
'I MUST BE CRAZY' OR:
'I MUST BE POSSESSED BY A DEMON!'
AND THEN BACK IN.
I CAN MAKE YOU FORGET THINGS--LIKE: HITTING YOU IN THE FACE WITH A PIE A MOMENT AGO, OR ...
I CAN MAKE YOU REMEMBER IT AGAIN.
WHERE DID IT GO? HOW COULD CEREBUS FORGET?
I CAN MAKE YOU REMEMBER IT AS A BLUEBERRY PIE...
OR YELLOW (MATTER) CUSTARD
AND THEN MAKE YOU FORGET WHAT IT WAS THAT HIT YOU IN THE FACE...
LEAVING ONLY THE MEMORY THAT I TOLD YOU WHAT IT WAS A SECOND AGO.

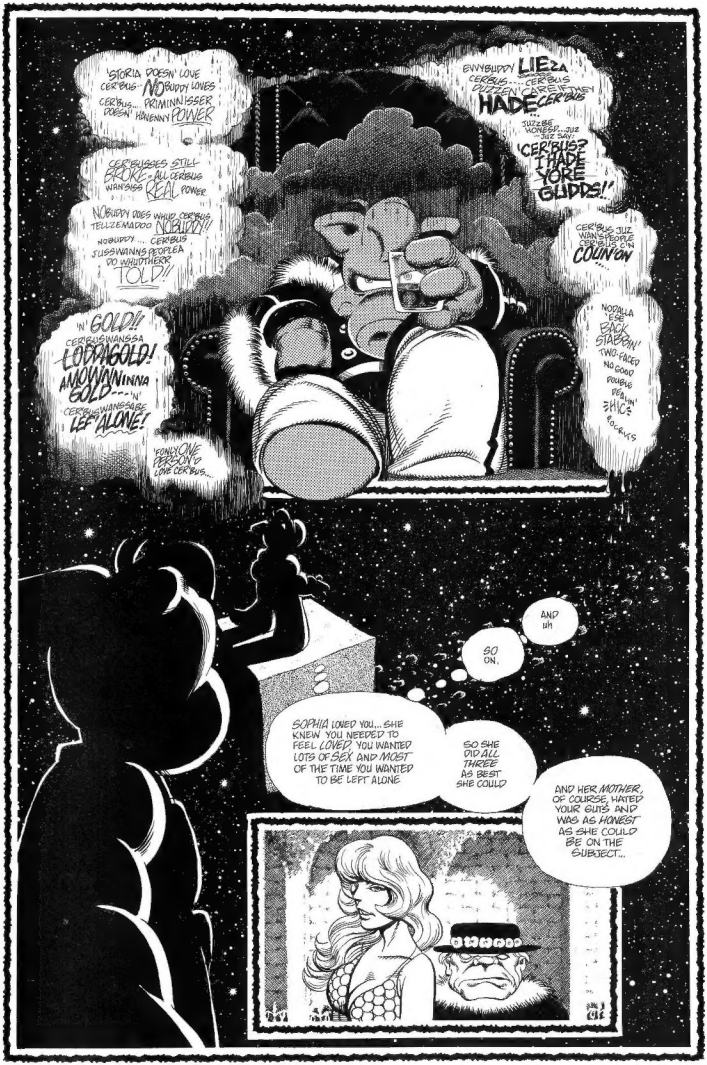

I CAN MAKE THE STARS THEMSELVES DISAPPEAR.
POIT.
AND ILLUMINATE YOU FROM ABOVE WITH A BRILLIANT BUT INVISIBLE LIGHT SOURCE
AND THEN.
POIT.
I CAN PUT EVERYTHING BACK THE WAY IT WAS.
SO! WHAT DOES THIS TELL YOU?
IF YOU'RE INSANE, THEN YOU'RE REALLY INSANE?
OR! IF I'M A DEMON
I'M A VERY, VERY POWERFUL DEMON?
OR!
I AM WHO I SAY I AM.
YOUR CREATOR.

CALL ME DAVE.
'DAVE'?
MM.
NOT EXACTLY... AWE-INSPIRING... IS IT?
'DAVE'?!
ACTUALLY I WENT THROUGH WHAT I'M PUTTING YOU THROUGH RIGHT NOW...
HOLD IT HOLD IT HOLD IT
... ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, ONLY IT WASN'T A VOICE IN MY HEAD...
'DAVE'!?
IT WAS MORE LIKE:

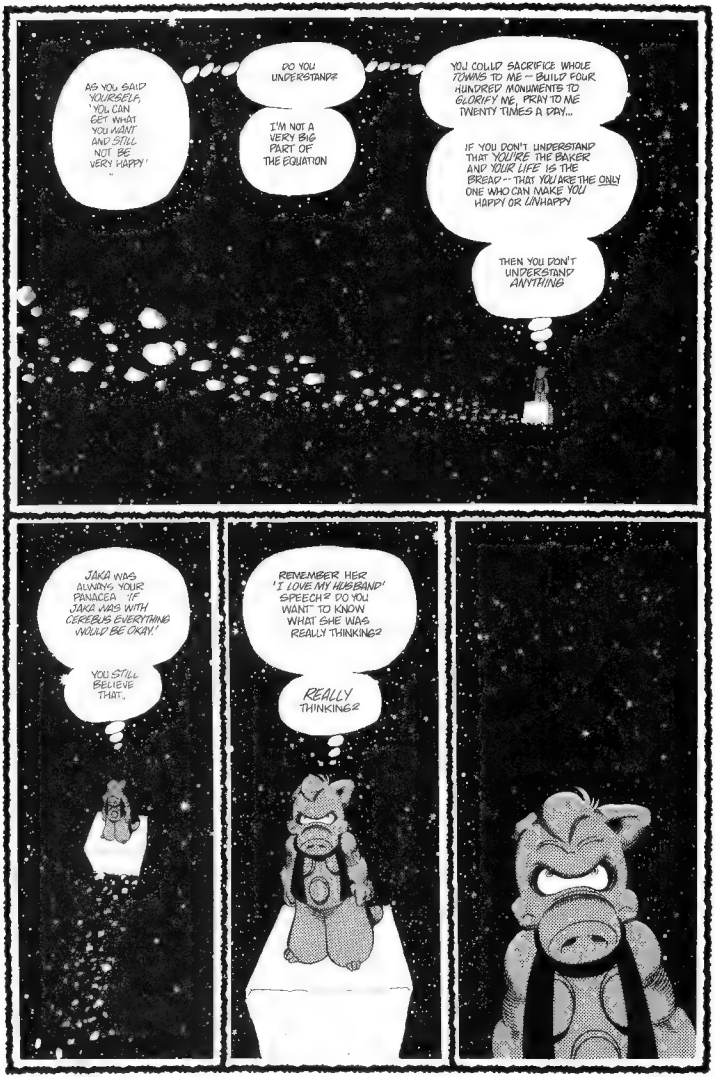


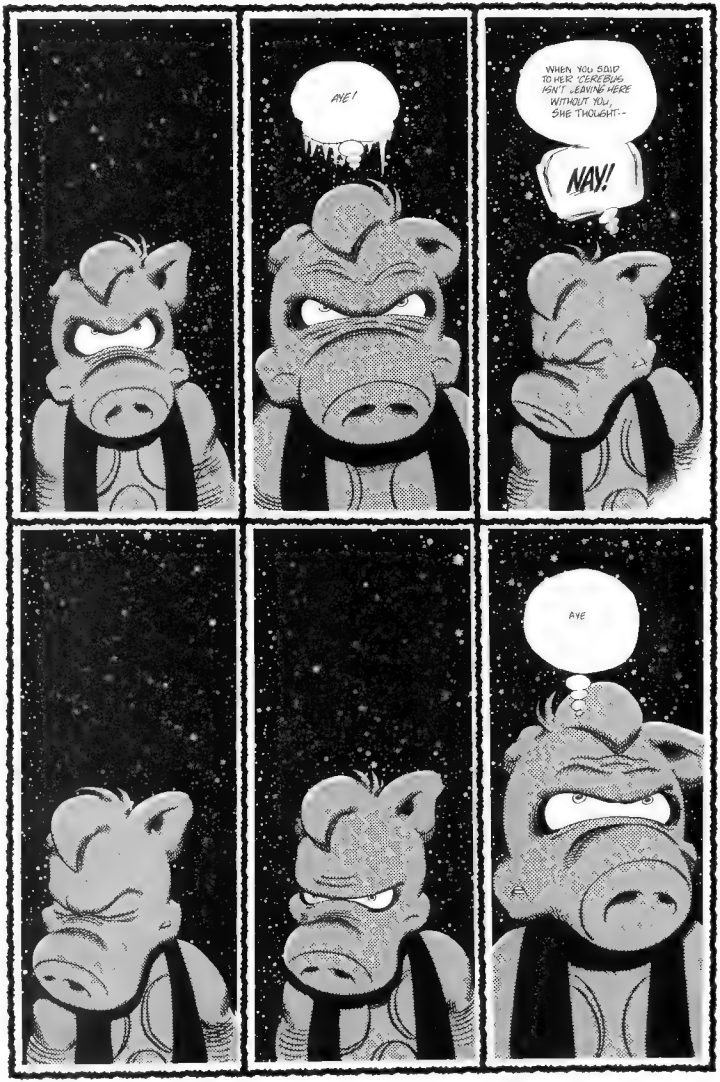

NO HEAVENLY CHOIR... NO SMELL OF BRIMSTONE. NO SOUND, NO SMELL WHATSOEVER. SO! WHAT WAS IT? MY CREATORS? TARIM? TERIM? GODZ A DEMON? THE DEVIL? MY TELEPATHY? SOME-ONE ELSE'S TELEPATHY? SPACE ALIENS MAYBE?
IT HAPPENED SHORTLY AFTER YOU MET THE BUG FOR THE FIRST TIME.
I KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT YOU AT THE TIME. BUT I DID KNOW YOU WERE AN HERMAPHRODITE.
AND I DID KNOW THAT YOUR FEMALE 'PLUMBING' WAS IRREVOCABLY DAMAGED IN THE 'KITCHEN KNIFE INCIDENT'
BUT- SUDDENLY- I FOUND I HAD A LOT MORE TO SAY.
I KNEW THAT THE STORY-- YOUR STORY HAD TO BE LARGE... REALLY LARGE... REALLY, REALLY LARGE.
I KNEW THE SITUATIONS I WANTED YOU TO FACE AND I WAS EAGER TO SEE HOW YOU WOULD REACT.
AND! I KNEW THAT SOME DAY (MANY YEARS LATER)
WE'D HAVE THIS CHAT...

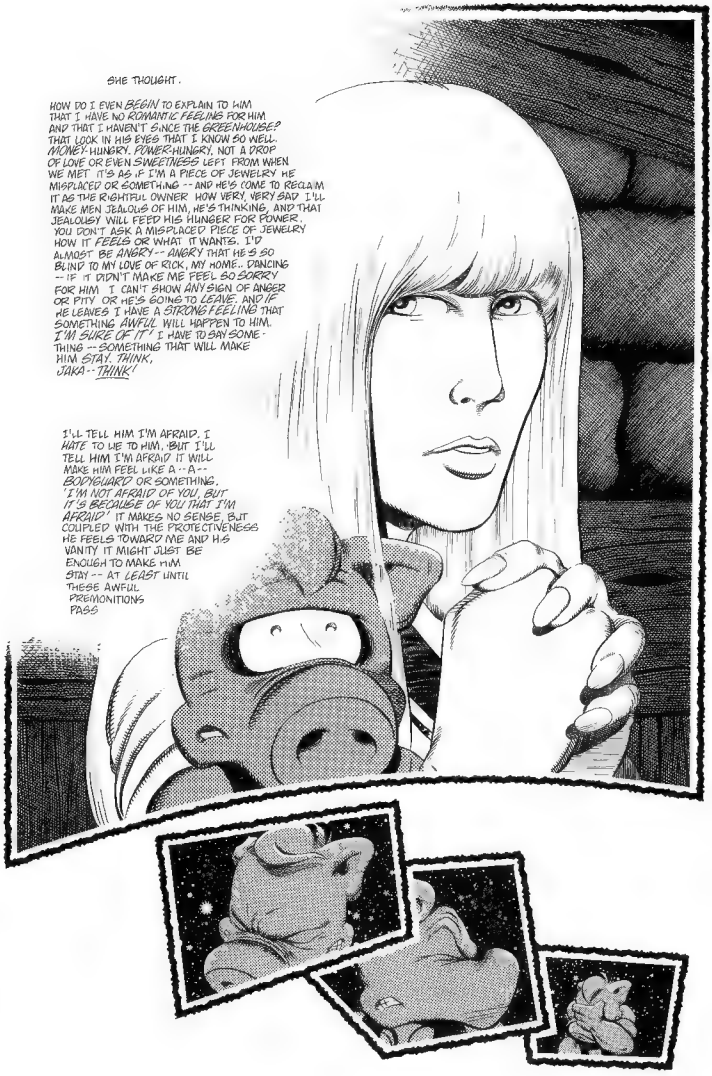

LOOK... uh... 'DAVE'
WHAT CEREBUS WANTS TO KNOW IS ...
WHOA WHOA WHOA!... THIS IS STILL MY PART OF THE CHAT. I STILL HAVE A FEW THINGS TO SAY...
THEN IT'LL BE YOUR TURN
(WHERE WAS I?)
(AH!)
NOW! YOU'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN TARIM-- AND I'M NOT HIM. TRUST ME ON THAT ONE.
IF YOU PASSED ME ON THE STREET YOU WOULDN'T LOOK TWICE AT ME...
BUT! I CAN CHANGE YOU, YOUR WORLD, YOUR MEMORIES -- EVERYTHING BIG AND SMALL ...
NOW-- WHO'S TO SAY THAT THE SAME ISN'T TRUE IN MY CASE?
'AS ABOVE, SO BELOW!'
I BELIEVE IN GOD -- OR TARIM OR SOMEONE OR SOMETHING ALONG THOSE LINES... BUT, SUPPOSE I'M IN THE SAME SITUATION THAT YOU ARE
WHOEVER 'CREATED' ME CAN AFFECT EVERYTHING ABOUT ME, CHANGE MY WORLD, MY MEMORIES, EVERYTHING BIG AND SMALL
BUT-- I WOULD WALK PAST MY CREATOR ON THE STREET WITHOUT GIVING HIM (OR HER) A SECOND LOOK.
AND SO ON UP THE LADDER: HIS CREATOR HAS A CREATOR AND HIS CREATOR'S CREATOR HAS A CREATOR
ALL OF THEM CURIOUS ABOUT THE ULTIMATE CREATOR (OF COURSE)
I INTRODUCE A SITUATION INTO YOUR LIFE. YOU REACT TO IT. I NEITHER APPROVE NOR DISAPPROVE OF YOUR REACTION. I DON'T PUNISH OR REWARD YOU. I NOTE YOUR REACTION AND...
... PROVIDE THE CONSEQUENCES -- IN THE FORM OF THE NEXT SITUATION. YOUR REACTION ...
... IMPLIES THE NEXT SITUATION, AND YOUR REACTION TO THAT SITUATION ...
IMPLIES THE NEXT SITUATION.
AND SO ON.

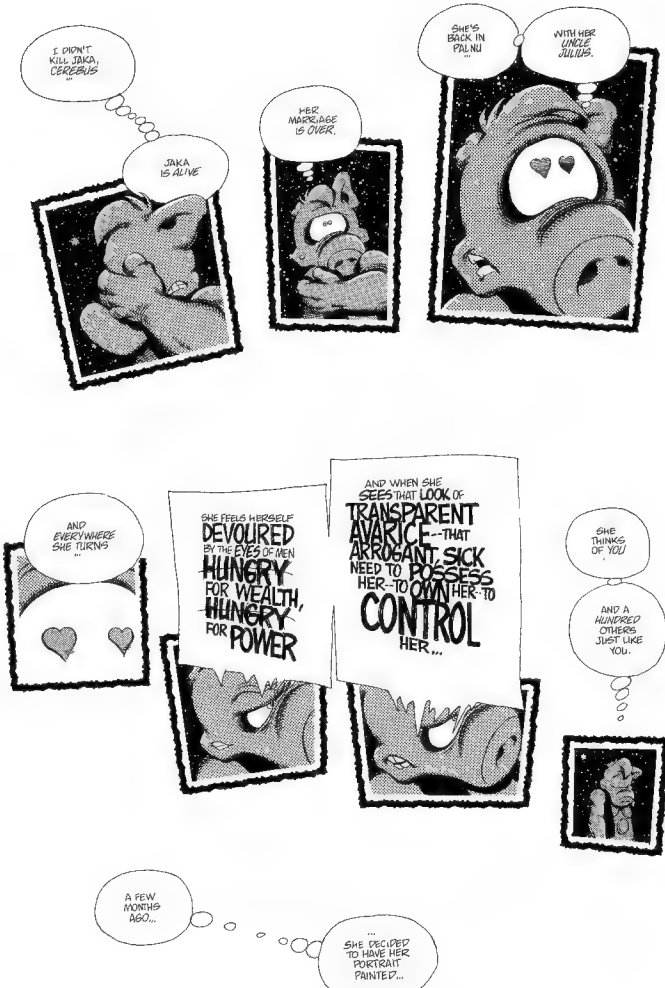

'STORIA DOESN' LOVE CER'BUS-
NOBUDDY LOVES CER'BUS... DOESN' HAVENNY POWER
PRIMINISSER
CER'BUSSES STILL BROKE- ALL CER'BUS WANNASS REAL POWER
NOBUDDY DIES WHILE CER'BUS TELLZEMADDO
NOBUDDY!!!
NOBUDDY... CER'BUS JUSSWANNS PEOPLE A DO ANUDDERS TOLD!!
'N' GOLD!!
CER'BUSWANNSA LODDAGOLD! ANUWANINNA GOLD---'N' CER'BUSWANSSABE LEF' ALONE!
EVVYBUDDY LIEZA CER'BUS... CER'BUS DUZZEN' CER'BUS HADE CER'BUS
JUZZABE WONDER...JUZ WUT SAY!
'CER'BUS? I HADE YORE GUDDS!'
CER'BUS JUZ WANNS PEOPLE FER'BUS'N COLIVON
NOPALLA FER BACK STABBIN'
TWO-FACED NO GOOD ROTTEN REAL'N RACC
EDGARUS
FONKYONE PERSON'D LOVE CER'BUS...
AND UH
SO ON..
SOPHIA LOVED YOU... SHE KNEW YOU NEEDED TO FEEL LOVED, YOU WANTED LOTS OF SEX AND MOST OF THE TIME YOU WANTED TO BE LEFT ALONE
SO SHE DID ALL THREE AS BEST SHE COULD
AND HER MOTHER, OF COURSE, HATED YOUR GUTS AND WAS AS HONEST AS SHE COULD BE ON THE SUBJECT...
GWAAD

AS POPE, YOU HAD ABSOLUTE POWER. YOU TOLD PEOPLE TO GIVE YOU GOLD AND THEY GAVE YOU A MOUNTAIN OF IT
NO ONE HAD ACCESS TO YOU
EXCEPT BEAR AND BOOBAH
THE TWO PEOPLE FROM YOUR DAYS AS A MERCENARY THAT YOU COULD COUNT ON. ALWAYS.
AVE ALWAYS
BUT!
(OF COURSE)
CEREBUS IS TIRED OF THIS "I LOVE YOU" SHE SAYS.
YEAH RIGHT
SO WHY IS CEREBUS WHO ALWAYS HAS TO GO LOOKING FOR HER?
SHE DOESN'T LOVE CEREBUS NOBODY LOVES CEREBUS
CEREBUS WANTS TO KILL WEISSHAUPT/ THAT'S WHAT CEREBUS WANTS TO DO
KILL WEISSHAUPT AND... AND GET RID OF SOPHIA AND HER STUPID MOTHER...
SEND BEAR OUT TO GET JAKA // SHE LOVES CEREBUS
CEREBUS JUST HAS TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET RID OF SOPHIA AND HER MOTHER
AND THEN BEAR AND BOOBAH...
SINCE THEY'RE PROBABLY STEALING CEREBUS' GOLD
SMUGGLING IT OUT WHILE CEREBUS IS SLEEPING...


AS YOU SAID YOURSELF, 'YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU WANT AND STILL NOT BE VERY HAPPY'
DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I'M NOT A VERY BIG PART OF THE EQUATION
YOU COULD SACRIFICE WHOLE TOWNS TO ME -- BUILD FOUR HUNDRED MONUMENTS TO GLORIFY ME, PRAY TO ME TWENTY TIMES A DAY...
IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE THE BAKER AND YOUR LIFE IS THE BREAD -- THAT YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE YOU HAPPY OR UNHAPPY
THEN YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING
JAKA WAS ALWAYS YOUR PANACEA. 'IF JAKA WAS WITH CEREBUS EVERYTHING WOULD BE OKAY.'
YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT.
REMEMBER HER 'I LOVE MY HUSBAND' SPEECH? DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS REALLY THINKING?
REALLY THINKING?


AYE!
WHEN YOU SOLD TO HER, CEREBUS ISN'T LEAVING HERE WITHOUT YOU, SHE THOUGHT--
NAY!
AYE


SHE THOUGHT.
HOW DO I EVEN BEGIN TO EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT I HAVE NO ROMANTIC FEELINGS FOR HIM AND THAT I HAVEN'T SINCE THE GREENHOUSE? THAT LOOK IN HIS EYES THAT I KNOW SO WELL. MONEY-HUNGRY. POWER-HUNGRY. NOT A DROP OF LOVE OR EVEN SWEETNESS LEFT FROM WHEN WE MET. IT'S AS IF I'M A PIECE OF JEWELRY HE MISPLACED OR SOMETHING -- AND HE'S COME TO RECLAIM IT AS THE RIGHTFUL OWNER. HOW VERY, VERY SAD. I'LL MAKE MEN JEALOUS OF HIM, HE'S THINKING, AND THAT JEALOUSY WILL FEED HIS HUNGER FOR POWER. YOU DON'T ASK A MISPLACED PIECE OF JEWELRY HOW IT FEELS OR WHAT IT WANTS. I'D ALMOST BE ANGRY -- ANGRY THAT HE'S SO BLIND TO MY LOVE OF RICK, MY HOME.. DANCING -- IF IT DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL SO SORRY FOR HIM. I CAN'T SHOW ANY SIGN OF ANGER OR PITY OR HE'S GOING TO LEAVE. AND IF HE LEAVES I HAVE A STRONG FEELING THAT SOMETHING AWFUL WILL HAPPEN TO HIM. I'M SURE OF IT. I HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING -- SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE HIM STAY. THINK, JAKA -- THINK!
I'LL TELL HIM I'M AFRAID. I HATE TO LIE TO HIM. BUT I'LL TELL HIM I'M AFRAID IT WILL MAKE HIM FEEL LIKE A -- A -- BODYGUARD OR SOMETHING. 'I'M NOT AFRAID OF YOU, BUT IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU THAT I'M AFRAID.' IT MAKES NO SENSE, BUT COUPLED WITH THE PROTECTIVENESS HE FEELS TOWARD ME AND HIS VANITY IT MIGHT JUST BE ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM STAY -- AT LEAST UNTIL THESE AWFUL PREMONITIONS PASS


I DIDN'T KILL JAKA, CERBERUS ...
JAKA IS ALIVE
HER MARRIAGE IS OVER.
SO
SHE'S BACK IN PALNU ...
WITH HER UNCLE JULIUS.
AND EVERYWHERE SHE TURNS ...
SHE FEELS HERSELF DEVOURED BY THE EYES OF MEN HUNGRY FOR WEALTH, HUNGRY FOR POWER
AND WHEN SHE SEES THAT LOOK OF TRANSPARENT AVARICE--THAT ARROGANT, SICK NEED TO POSSESS HER--TO OWN HER--TO CONTROL HER...
SHE THINKS OF YOU
AND A HUNDRED OTHERS JUST LIKE YOU.
A FEW MONTHS AGO...
... SHE DECIDED TO HAVE HER PORTRAIT PAINTED...

You see before you, gentle lady, the fruits of my labours as Chairman of the Pelnan Arts Council. Every well-regarded painter in the land displayed in descending order of popularity. Of these none is more universally heralded than

This is all of them, then?

Mm Yes. Of course, these are merely studies and cartoons which anticipate the finished work. Any detail or colour scheme which fails to please you can be changed or

They're all a bit... much, don't you think? I mean, I've never worn a suit of armour in my life, and as for the ceremonial robes and capes... it's all I can do to make it through an investiture that lasts an hour. I'm scarcely interested in reminding myself of that when I'm eating my morning grapefruit.

Ah. Ah. Yes. I see. Well, as I said, anything which doesn't please you can be changed. You're looking for something less formal then.

Formal, I could live with. All of these seem bent on... I don't know.. deification? And you're sure this is all of them?

Mmm yes. Yes, indeed. Perhaps we could discuss which of these you might most

The reason I ask is that one of my maids told me that you had a picture submitted which you considered... unsuitable. You had a short chat with her when you arrived for our second appointment.

I'm very sorry. That was indiscreet of me

Not at all. Not at all. Cynthia is a wonderful... conversationalist.

Ah. You are most gracious, gentle lady, but, still, I humbly apologize

I'd like to see it, please. The unsuitable picture.

Ah. I believe it has already been returned to the artist

You are very sweet to be concerned about my feelings, but, like any honest man, you haven't the capacity to sustain an untruth. I am very flattered and grateful for your concern, but I'm afraid I must insist. As you are a gentleman, I am relying on you not to put me in the awkward position of having to do so more than once. Please.

As you wish, gentle lady. I have the 'picture' is too flattering a word — the 'thing' right over this way in my office. In fact, I retained the picture for exactly the reason that I felt some comment was required when I returned it. And then I thought that even a rebuke from someone in my position might grant the thing a dignity to which it was not entitled. If you wish me to alert the appropriate authorities I can do so at once. In fact, I should probably have done so when I first laid eyes upon it. So. Now, that the wretched thing has been

No, no. Don't cover it up again. I want to look at it.

As you wish, gentle lady. The man is obviously no better than a beast. Insulting you, desecrating our flag. I can assure you that everyone associated with this incident within the Council will be — Ah! Ah, yes. Exactly my reaction. It is laughable. A beast, yes. But no threat to you, is it? No. A capering monkey of a thing. Ridiculous in its

This one. This is the painter I want.

But gentle lady, he's — well, he's not even a painter. He's — he's

Have all the other works returned along with a cheque for twenty-five crowns and my compliments. And ask the artist... has he signed it? Ah, he has... have Mr. Zulli arrange an appointment in my suite for the day after tomorrow. Mid-evening.

Gentle lady, I must respectfully point out — in my capacity as the Chairman of

Thank you so much. I really must return to my rooms now and write you a letter of recommendation. You've been helpful. Wonderfully helpful. Bonjour, Mr. Chairman.

You understand my situation.

I have a speculative nature. It posed no great difficulty.

I hope I won't offend you by saying that the imagery is not precisely what I was looking for. Remarkable as it is, I would have to judge it as self-pitying. I am, after all, here of my own free will. Do you understand?

Completely, my lady. Do you wish me to do some different sketches?

Is it possible for us just to discuss it?

You have my undivided attention.

What I liked about it was the portrayal of isolation and tension. But it seems to imply a tension between myself and the State which, for me, is not the larger issue. There is confinement, but this too is not the larger issue upon which your wonderful picture... speculates. I know about quite freely and (her gesture was diffidently inclusive of her living quarters) luxury itself is hardly cause for anxiety. But one feels oneself being devoured nonetheless. And not just by those with malicious intent; the effect is the same... if not greater... in the company of well-wishers. One exists on a summit of perception, surrounded by summits of lesser perception (she smiled), or more accurately; summits which are popularly perceived to be lesser. I lack no empathy with this. I remember how it was when Uncle Julius married. It seemed, for a time, as if his wife...

had inhaled all of Painu's air and everyone else was gasping for breath

Thank you. The mistake is in thinking that the condition can be alleviated by the withdrawal of one's physical presence.

To remove yourself completely is to feed the hunger beyond the gilded bars until it becomes insatiable

(she smiled at this) You're making this very easy for me. Of course, there is one... and only one... with whom this isn't the case.

Lord Julius

And there, there the problem is one of interposing myself. I can go and see him whenever I want. He always makes time for me. But each moment that passes in his company makes me feel as if I am single-handedly holding weighty affairs of state from his attentions. I feel as if I'm a dam holding back a river... a... a...

a distraction. A frivolous distraction

Yes. And that's unbearable.

So you wait for him to summon you. Which he hardly ever does

Which he never does. (remarkably, this was said without a note of bitterness)

Which he never does (the artist managed to restrain any note of surprise). Do you wish him to see the picture? (this was conversational, but direct, and caught her by surprise)

I... I'm not sure. (she sought safer ground) I know I don't want it publicly displayed. I want it to be...

Yes, yes. A personal thing (on the surface of it he was impertinent, but she was shying away from the larger issue, and here their respective roles in society did not apply). I knew that before I came here (a measured rap to her aristocratic knuckles; in spite of herself she bristled and was secretly relieved when it had no effect upon him. To him, 'here' was the leading edge of the discussion, not the luxurious confines of her suite. She misconstrued this as bravery, and — as the effect this created served his purpose, he made no effort at clarification) Do you wish me to make a picture of the situation which exists between the two of you or do you wish me to make a picture of your situation relative to him?

(she pondered this for several minutes; she now understood the question but it required probing more deeply within herself than she had thought would be necessary. He was relieved that doing so came naturally to her. She accepted the necessity for an answer without entering into the needless digression of inquiring into the motive behind the question as he half expected she would — the ruler was still poised over her knuckles but she was unaware of this) I'd like it to be a picture that, if he never came here... here to my room (unconsciously she had connected with his own previous distinction and had rejoined him at the leading edge of the discussion)... the picture might make him understand. (she looked at him, wondering if this was sufficient; he nodded and they were past the crisis point) May I ask you a question?

(the rap on the knuckles had obviously been too sharp; his voice reflected an aristocratic mingling of guilt and pleasure at the reversal of their roles) Certainly, my lady. What is it that you wish to know?

Two questions, really (at this assertion their roles had retreated to a more appropriate balance and they had both relaxed). Why is it you aren't taking notes?

Why, is it that you don't want me to do further sketches? (at this they both smiled. Their shared purpose was now actual, the dance nearly concluded. He anticipated the final step and could afford the largesse of submission) And the other question?

Why is it that you want this commission? (her gaze was level and he felt her warmth retreating from him. She lived surrounded by sycophants and brigands, rogues and scoundrels. Her sensory apparatus quivered delicately. The smallest untruth or distortion would not go undetected)

I'm a commercial illustrator by trade. Doubtless, out of some perverse sensibility beyond my reckoning, Tarim saw fit to endow me with artistic aptitudes but has coupled these with an instinct for seeing a picture through the eyes of the inartistic — an ability to render the image in precisely the way they would do so themselves had they the skill. For many years, I have derived the greatest satisfaction from pleasing both them and myself, walking the tightrope between my patrons and my Muse. Some time ago I did the covers for a series of reads (as enunciated by him, the word fairly dripped poison) — by a man named Victor Reid.

I've never heard of him.

You may count yourself blessed on that score, my lady. Anyway, the royalties have made me wealthy. And the wealth severed the tightrope. I had my choice of any commercial assignment I desired and that, in itself, killed all of my desire for commercial assignments.

And now you sense the hunger growing beyond your own gilded bars. (the leading edge of the discussion hurtled forward, both their scalps now tingling, their spirits buoyant)

Precisely. Now I wish only to do pictures which are intended to satisfy myself. Paintings. Not the engravings with which I have earned my livelihood. When I learned of the competition for your commission, I knew that I had found, in one, the perfect closure to my past life and the door to my future.

(she laughed delightedly as the leading edge of the discussion leapfrogged past her) So I will get a study of the painting, after all?

(suddenly, he had the largest respect and admiration for her. She had transcended all of his expectations and his soul seemed to soar within his breast) Yes. You'll have the engraving in a week's time. (he now prepared the stair-step to white radiance) I'd like to have it back when I deliver the finished work.

That goes without saying. (now she felt his warmth retreat from her. The moment was lost) I'm sorry, you're right (this was insufficient and she knew it) 'I would consider it the only equitable basis for this transaction'. (this was an aristocratic recitation and the foul taste in her mouth was instantaneous). We are ugly, aren't we? (the unintended meaning dragged him into the muck with her) Patrons, I mean. (the qualification reinforced the faux pas — she stood revealed to herself) I won't ask you to name your price, anyway. I know better than that, at least.

That is an awareness I have never encountered before and it pleases me more than I could ever express. Thank you. (she searched his eyes for any trace of irony and saw only sincerity. Radiance returned and he chose his moment to feed it) Perhaps you'd like to show me what clothes you want to be wearing in the picture.

(her eyes gleamed like those of a child unwrapping a longed-for gift) I didn't know how to ask. It seemed presumptuous... just to assume... assume that I could...

(the radiance between them grew and he smiled through it) But you had them picked out. Just in case.

(she blushed at this) Yes. Just in case. Did you know all along? (the obscurity of the question was intended to puncture his impenetrable self-assurance by forcing his own inquiry)

That I would get the commission? (his self-assurance thus reinforced, she was compelled merely to nod and smile) I knew that if you saw the study, no other outcome was possible.

Coming from anyone else (she teased), that would sound egotistical.

(he lost no time in reflection) Thank you.

I'll get changed and be right back. (she tugged a long, silken chord) Tell the butler I'd like a glass of wine and have him bring you whatever you want to drink or eat.

In the weeks consumed by the completion of the painting no further word regarding payment had passed between them. At last, the painter removed the engraving from its resting place on the wallpaper (of his own design) and replaced it with the finished work. He and Jaka shared a bottle of vintage red wine and sat in two armchairs facing 'Enchantement (for so he had christened it).

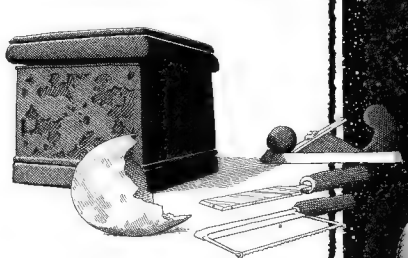
They sat, for the most part, in silent and separate reverie, conversing only sporadically and then lapsing into silence once more. They parted company that night, patron and artist, with a formality that was not without human warmth. They knew they would never see each other again.

A package arrived at his studio the next day which contained a small chest of solid gold, intricately carved and inlaid with precious stones. Within the box, resting on the finest purple velvet, was an eggshell adorned with a pastel flourish, painstakingly rendered in imitation of the wallpaper design which framed his picture, unmistakably rendered in an amateur's hand.

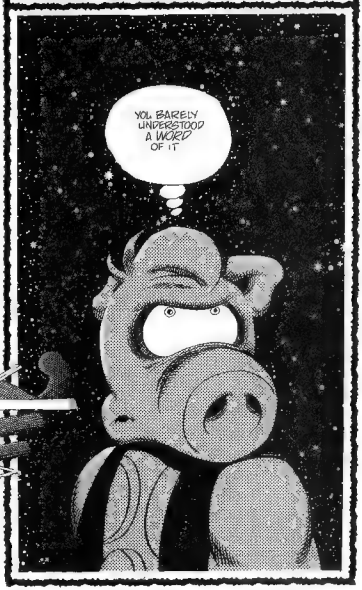
The eggshell had been broken, carefully, into two pieces.

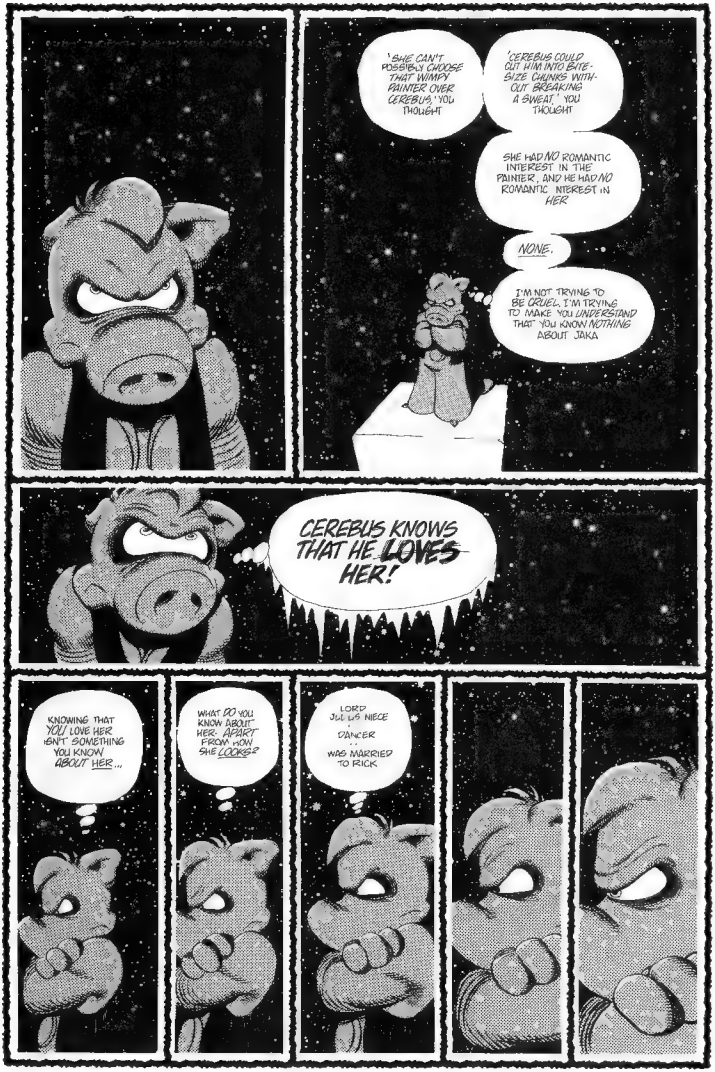
Each night, after completing his work, he would sit contemplating the box and the eggshell halves within. He purchased some fine wood and an inexpensive set of small saws and chisels and planes. After several weeks, his hands scarred and his nails splintered, he had constructed a small, lop-sided ebony box whose lid did not fit properly. On its front was carved a relief of that same wallpaper pattern, crude but recognizable.

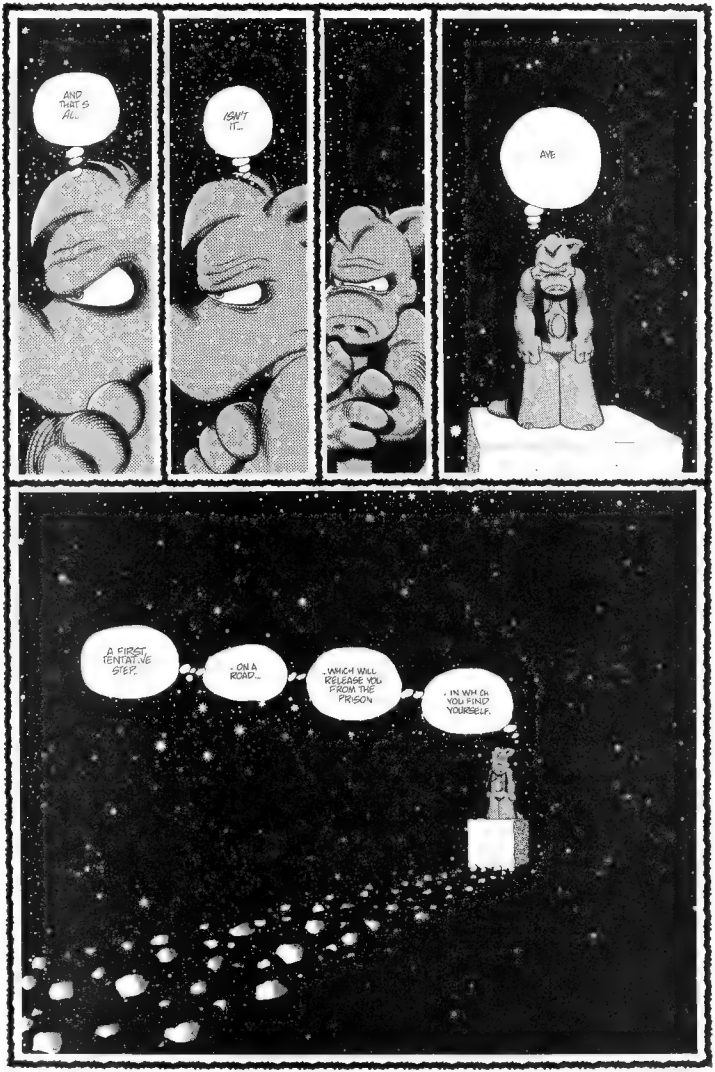
He lined the box with one of his best silk handkerchiefs, placed one half of the eggshell within it, and had it sent, by courier, to her residence.



THE SINGLE MOST SIGNIFICANT EPISODE IN JAKA'S RECENT LIFE.
HER FIRST TENTATIVE STEP ON THE ROAD TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE WHERE SHE WILL ESCAPE THE PRISON IN WHICH SHE FINDS HERSELF.
SHE WILL REDISCOVER THE WORLD ...
AND, IN SO DOING, ...
REDISCOVER HERSELF.




'SHE CAN'T POSSIBLY CHOOSE THAT WIMPY PAINTER OVER CEREBUS,' YOU THOUGHT
'CEREBUS COULD CUT HIM INTO BITE-SIZE CHUNKS WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT,' YOU THOUGHT
SHE HAD NO ROMANTIC INTEREST IN THE PAINTER, AND HE HAD NO ROMANTIC INTEREST IN HER
NONE.
I'M NOT TRYING TO BE CRUEL. I'M TRYING TO MAKE YOU UNDERSTAND THAT YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT JAKA
CEREBUS KNOWS THAT HE LOVES HER!
KNOWING THAT YOU LOVE HER ISN'T SOMETHING YOU KNOW ABOUT HER...
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HER- APART FROM HOW SHE LOOKS?
LORD JULIUS NIECE DANCER .. WAS MARRIED TO RICK


AND THAT'S ALL.
ISN'T IT...
AYE
A FIRST, TENTATIVE STEP.
...ON A ROAD...
...WHICH WILL RELEASE YOU FROM THE PRISON
...IN WHICH YOU FIND YOURSELF.

SPIRITS of INDEPENDENCE 1995

LOCAL LIAISONS:

JULY 1, 1995
MANCHESTER, VERMONT
Steve Bissette, *Tyrant*
P.O. Box 442
Wilmington, VT 05363

AUGUST 12, 1995
WILMETTE, ILLINOIS
Larry Marder,
Tales of the Beanworld
P.O. Box 664, Wilmette, IL 60091

SEPTEMBER 9, 1995
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
Don Simpson, *Bizarre Heroes*
P.O. Box 44326
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

OCTOBER 7, 1995
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
James Owen, *Starchild*
P.O Box 40904
Mesa, AZ 85274

NOVEMBER 4, 1995
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI
Richard Corben, *Den*
P.O. Box 8632
Kansas City, MO 64114

DECEMBER 3, 1995
KITCHENER, ONTARIO
Dave Sim, *Cerebus*
P.O. Box 1674, Station C
Kitchener, Ontario
CANADA N2G 4R2

Eight-foot draped tables:
$15 ea. U.S. funds
$20 ea. Canadian

send cheque or money order to:
Aardvark-Vanaheim Inc.
Box 1674, Station C
Kitchener, Ontario,
Canada N2G 4R2

Fax: (519) 576-0955

AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,

O.K., here it is: my official entry in the Aardvark Comment's ever-growing canon of Shitty Love Experiences. There was this girl in my history class, attractive in that goth-rocker way. I don't figure I have any chance with her, and forget about it. Several weeks into class, she moves to the seat next to me at the front table. Over the next few weeks, she initiates several awkward conversations: "God, it's cold out there", "Do you have last lecture's notes?" etc. Finally, as we're leaving class after a test, she asks me if I want to go to lunch with her. We talk and laugh; everything goes fine. She suggests we exchange phone numbers. I call her that week and we make a date. I call her several times in the interim and we talk for hours on end. I'm flyin' high. We go out (to see Jim Carrey in *The Mask* — maybe the problems in this relationship aren't so hard to fathom, after all...) and have fun. Then. She just stops talking to me. A few terse words in class before she takes off, and that's if I initiate it. Every time I call, I'm told she's asleep or "out". I finish the next test before she does and leave a note on her car. I'm especially talented at crafting these things. I tell her if she doesn't want to see me, fine, but could she at least explain things. Nothing. Now she comes into class late and leaves in a hurry. I haven't tried to talk to her anymore, and I've moved across the room. What gives? By all indicators she was totally into me. WHAT THE FUCK GIVES? Now, if I'm lucky enough to find another girl before I arrange my shotguns by barrel flavor (Hi, Kurt!), I'll be paranoid. No matter how good it's going, I'll always know they could freak on me like this. I mean, this was the most promising beginning to a relationship I've EVER had. An attractive female talking to ME, asking ME out. This does NOT happen. I'm no Pud Withers, but this simply does NOT happen. So now I'm fucked (metaphorically, though, alas, not physically). I WILL figure this out. There are only two more weeks left, counting final exam, but I will figure this out. Should I confront her, or leave a cowardly note again? Logic says confront, gutlessness says note. Dammit, Dave, I need sage advice.

Thanx for letting me vent on the "Hollow Halls".

Rick Driskill
c/o Apocalypse A Go-Go
5909 Wilkerson #174
Fayetteville, AR
USA 72704

P.S. All of this goes to show you and Victor are right, dammit!

I hope you didn't leave the note. Shit happens. Maybe you didn't take it slow enough for her. Maybe she didn't want it to be a relationship. Maybe she got interested in someone else. I've been on both sides of the equation. I can guarantee that the explanation would not make you happy — it gives you something to cling to and her message is to let go. Let go.

★★★★★★★★★★

Listen,

If I recall the last time you wouldn't answer letters, it was:

"Guess who just broke up with his girlfriend."

Recently you printed your feelings about male/female relations and also withdrew from answering letters, apparently because people were disagreeing with you.

Since this was pointed out to you, you have only responded to whoever parrots your own views. Anyone else gets a snide remark but no real defense of your issue. What's the matter? Afraid of a fair fight? Can't carry on a mature discourse, let alone a mature relationship?

Notice, you get so many breakup letters because you signed yourself up as President of this Lonely Hearts Club. While you were gone, the letters column discussed world events, human rights, etc. Did you join in any of that? When you did come back, mainly you encouraged talk about yourself and your failed love life. So, from this wealth of self-pity you found Divine Insight? Sounds like circular logic:

The light of reason
Male is reasonable
Male is light.

Void of reason
Female is unreasonable
Female is void.

Inconsistent with real life by your own admission. You also disproved it by your behavior. You've inflated your anger and your ego by turning a conflict with one woman into a conflict with all women. All you've proved is that immaturity is ageless.

"But _____ aren't fair!" You hear that from men and women. That's because immaturity is sexless as well. It happens to everybody. It doesn't make you special. Even if you did build your own soap box. It's also pointless to bring it from the letters page into the story line just to stretch the book to 300 issues.

Get over it. Learn from it, grow up and move on. Then maybe you'll attract an equally mature partner who will support and respect you as much as you support and respect her.

If all you do is cry in your beer, nothing will change and you'll continue to have one bad experience after another.

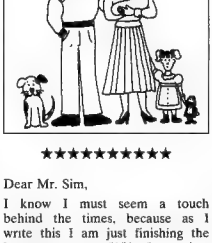
Learn from the mistakes, allow for each other's humanity, take responsibility. All reasonable, adult behavior.

I can't believe you've been celibate all these years since your breakup. Perhaps all those encounters with nondiscriminating and noncommittal women have been a bad influence.

Fireman Sarmiento
AD-43 USS Cape Cod
Div R-1/17-A
FPO AP 96649-2535

No, I'm not afraid of a fair fight. Since I'm in the extreme minority, I don't think a fair fight is possible. I can go one on one with as many of you as I want, but the supply of you is endless. I have to call a halt somewhere. Yes, I did join in a number of discussions on world events and human rights — where have *you* been? I can't remember encouraging talk about my failed love life — since I don't see my love life as failed but, rather, successful (one step at a time). It is your opinion that I've turned a conflict with one woman (who is the woman, pray tell?) into a conflict with all women. Since you don't know me, I don't know what you think you're basing your argument on. It would be pointless to drag the letters page into the book just to stretch the book to 300 issues. The story stretches to 300 issues just fine, thanks — including *Reads*. Who said I'm crying in my beer? I repeat — you don't know me. Who supplied you with the information that my encounters have been with non-discriminating and noncommittal women? I can guarantee you that I don't see them that way and that they don't see themselves that way. Thank you for taking the time and trouble to type out so many pages of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. It's an interesting batch of opinions which I found, at various points, wilfully ignorant, self-evident and not applicable. I'm glad it 'hits a gong' with you. It doesn't with me. Except where it does.

Fireman Sarmiento also sent along this picture, which I reproduce here without comment.



★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Mr. Sim,

I know I must seem a touch behind the times, because as I write this I am just finishing the letters page to #181. I am just reading your reply to Andrew Coltrin's letter regarding your AIDS theory. A large amount of what you have said seems very plausible, so if you don't mind, I would like to add my twopenny's worth to your tangled web of conspiracy theories. If I sound a tad naive, please forgive me. It must be endemic to the British (even though I'm part Irish). Here goes: In the early to mid-'70s, the American government and so-called intelligence services suffered one of the largest embarrassments in their history. They lost a conflict in Asia. The great god of technological might had lost to a primitive but powerful understanding of its *home land*. The American Populace had become dissatisfied with the war (or low-intensity conflict). "Reds" weren't an acceptable scapegoat, as the '50s witch-hunts had faded to an unpleasant memory. Then some high and mighty mucky-muck with a psyche full of sexual hang-ups and savagely repressed desires (Hoover, maybe?) got to talking with the bio-war boffins. In high government places, an ugly disease was springing into being. The first major stirrings of Homophobia were about to show. Meanwhile, back in misinformationsville central, a small team of bio-war scientists coordinating with members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (probably still reeling when the Pope opened Fatima's final prediction and, as the cardinals filed out, the Pope ordered the prediction sealed and suppressed. No one knows why) decided to target the people who are "engaging in practices that are an abomination in God's eyes", ie., homosexual men and bisexual women, lesbians, drug addicts, the unemployed, etc. ... the list is endless. Unfortunately (and unknown by the "Geniuses" who created it), any act of sexual penetration would spread the "disease". Any. Act. The crucial factor in recognising that this is a man-made plague and not a natural culling of overpopulation (ie., the black plague) is that the virus cannot survive outside a human host. Reasoning that this modern-day "black death" is spread in a manner appropriate to the times is, in my opinion, shit. The reason sexual penetration/shared needles is the way it is spread is designed to prick our conscience. In an age where you can choose the sex of your child and edit out congental defects, this isn't too far-fetched. Consider a toxin called Soman. One part Soman to one million parts water is enough to massacre a continent. All of the people on the continent of America. Don't think everyone is labouring for a cure. There already is one. It's just not financially viable to release it yet.

Finally, thanks for the guys at Page 45 for showing me *Cerebus*. Thanks for all the issues and my enjoyment, Dave and Ger. I owe you big-time. And my theories might be appearing in a self-published comic soon! Might. (PLUG, PLUG.)

Best wishes,

Rob
25 Willow Road
Loughborough
Leicester LE11 2JX
England

Interesting opinion — particularly the Fatima's predictions thing. This is the first I've heard of it. What were the other predictions?

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave:

A *very* nice issue. A *very* nice issue *indeed*.

I've just finished reading 190, having turned 19 on the previous day. *Cerebus* would be 5/6 as old as I, had it been monthly since its inception. I told myself I'd write Dave Sim after reading 190. And a *very* nice issue *indeed*, explaining several motifs, from the lightning on the sword (in "The Night Before") to the dream-wound from *C&S* and *Melmoth*.

Well, if I'm to get this printed, I'd better stop discussing the story line and talk about my personal life. I'm currently in a "just friendship" with a young woman whose romantic life is a source of constant... well, *amusement*. She has finally realized that she should be able to cook at least half as well as I can.

But who needs that gossip, really, Dave? Perhaps I should address the Gender Wars... or not. Oh, I've got it: the Computer Nets! Being a subscriber to the oft-plugged Cerebi E-mail List (cerebi@erzo.berkeley.edu; to subscribe, e-mail majordomo@erzo.berkeley.edu, with "subscribe cerebi" in body), I will report that not all of us believe you Need to be Taken Down a Peg or Five, especially as you don't care about us anyway.

186, you will be proud to hear, touched off a two-month flame war on "Reason vs. Emotion," "Truth," and *The Bell Curve*. Many people took the attitude, "Dave's *really* like that? Man, that sucks." (I also need to settle a net.argument: between you, me, and Forty-Thousand-Eyes-Roach, what's your real attitude towards Alan Moore?)

As unpleasant to read as *Reads* may have been, I can see now that it was necessary, as was the slow pacing of 187-189. It may not be comfortable, but, in a way, it's beautiful. That having been said, what you've been doing with the pacing really exacerbates the disparity between effort put in and length of time to read, especially in a monthly comic.

There was one other question which plagued the net.gurus: what do the three stars around the moon, and their various gyrations, represent? Could it simply be the Aardvarks, or the trinity of Male, Female, Hermaphrodite? Hopefully the explanation for this will be as satisfying as that offered in 190 for the groin wound, and not a seeming cop-out like 178.

The early opinion on 190 was: a bunch of griping about the front-cover ad (interrupted by some supporters), overall very positive reaction to the story, and a few questions such as: "Is Young Cerebus a Fisher King archetype?" and "Is he menstruating, and if so, was his first period brought on by the anxiety over the kitchen knife, or was he merely stabbed?" and the persistent "Will Cerebus get pregnant?"

To this I'd add, "Is Tarim only now cleansing him (pp. 10-11) or was he cleansed as Young Cerebus (pg. 14) would imply?" along with the ever-popular "When will you explain the fire sneezes again?"

So does this count as "comfortable" or "un-"? And will the net effect of placing all the major revelations 60-66% of the way through the story be to remove most of the mystical aura which is such an integral component of *Cerebus* (and the dream scenes in *Bone*, I might add)?

I also feel compelled to respond to your "Big Picture" essay (which thankfully came before the story, thus adding to the suspense). Right now I'm not on the beaches or even in the ocean. I have the luxury of conducting a few training maneuvers in a swimming pool. I am referring, of course, to *Sketchbook*, a comics anthology which I founded at Harvard University two years ago.

Soon enough, I will be handing over the reins of power to a new presiding officer in order to pursue my vocation (bio-organic chemistry) and become merely a contributor. If self-publishing is even twice as hard as putting out a university 'zine with practically no paid distribution and practically no advertising sales, it should be quite a while before I am even ready for that. And especially after what you said in 188 about writers self-publishing... well, one must plan ahead.

So that's what I'm doing. I'm continuing to publish my serialized 8-pages per-episode *Cement Man* in the pages of *Sketchbook* (now up to CM #6: "A Sunless Sea") and meanwhile retooling the first several episodes to bring them from drooling fanboy quality to maybe even half as good as Chichester's *Daredevil*. (Now there's an example of Marvel Corporate Mentality: pulling Dan from his phenomenal run on that title. DD #332 is the best laid-out Marvel comic of the '90s, and then they had to sucker-punch the guy.) Anyway, those scripts are going into the Vault, one panel description at a time, one word balloon at a time, one thumbnail at a time, one page at a time, one episode at a time. And when the time is right, possibly even after the Big Convulsion, you will walk into your local comics store and, right next to the latest *Cerebus*, you will see the 48-page *Cement Man: Synchronicity* one-shot (that's Book One). And then we'll see whether a writer has a snowball's chance of self-publishing.

You may say, "Oh, he'll never do it." You may say, "He's just afraid to take the Leap." Well, someday the ducks are going to form up into a nice little row. And I'll be there, and I'll continue to be there until all 1000-2000 pages of *Cement Man* have been published. Perhaps some will be published post-humously. But I can afford to wait. Perhaps that makes me lucky. But there will come a time, and a place, and there will be a devastating Sim parody in Book Twelve, wherein it is demonstrated that everything is Roach Fodder.

I would like to close the spiel with a short verse work by me which received appreciation on "the Computer Nets" in response to "Reads." It is meant in the same exact spirit as the Viktor Davis text in *Reads*: uncomfortable, perhaps, but ultimately beguiling and mind-expanding.

'Twas the Night Before
Wednesday:
With Apologies to Dave Sim,
Clement Clarke Moore, and Ted
"Dr." Seuss Geisel

'Twas the night before Wednesday,
and all through the house
Not a comic was stirring, not even
a Maus.
The sub folders were stacked by
the mantel with care
In hopes that new Cerebus soon
would be there.
Mature readers were nestled all
snug in their beds
As slaughters of Cirinists danced
in their heads,
And Mama in her ski mask and I

in my gown
For a long winter's evening had just settled down
When outside my window arose such a clatter
I jumped from my bed to see what was the matter.
My sword and my axe I had grabbed in a flash,
I hacked through the window with one mighty slash!
Then what to my wondering eyes should approach
But a sleigh that was drawn by a giant cockroach!
In the back of the sleigh sat a chap white as snow
And he called out these words as the sleigh on did go:
"On, Cockroach! On, Moon Roach! On, Wolvie and Preston!
Go faster, that is, did you think I was jestin'?
On, Normalroach, Punisher, Sarah, and Snuff!
If you don't listen up, boy, you won't learn enough!
To the apex, that is, to the top of the snow,
Now, whoa, did you hear me? Boy, whoa, I said, WHOA!"
For I knew Elrod then by his skin and his tone
And I realized then that he wasn't alone,
For behind him sat someone all shrouded in shade,
Was that Po, I imagined? Not Cirin, I prayed!
And then I heard footsteps on top of my roof
And I heard someone shout, "Here comes Santa Roach! — OOF!"
It was clear someone'd kicked him quite hard in the gut,
But just who was that passenger, or was it "what"?
My questions were answered quite early enough:
In my fireplace a figure appeared with a puff!
He was covered in soot from his head to his toe,
But his earring was shiny and still all aglow.
Clearly male, so not Cirnn; too fat to be Rick —
I knew in a moment that this must be Vik!
"Viktor Davis," he said with a loud booming voice.
"Shake hands with me now — for you don't have a choice!"
And he shook and he shook till my hand had turned blue.
"Now let's see what old Viktor has got here for you!"
And with this he took 183 from a bucket
And up our dear reader's posterior stuck it!

I just stuttered, "But, Viktor, what happened to Sim?"
"Oh, that old worrywart? Well, I got rid of him!
There will have to be changes in this comic book!
Here, I've got issue 195 — take a look!"
And I read through the comic book there that he had:
It was just twenty pages of "Women Are Bad!"
Aardvark Comment had grown to a sickening size,
"Half the letters, you know, are just me in disguise!
Don't read this," he said, with a chortling laugh,
That's the way things will go for the rest of this half!"
"But, but, Viktor," I stammered, "this book was so good!"
And removing the book from my colon, I stood
But old Viktor was quick, and he said, "Mind your betters!
I think what I'll do now is practice my letters!"
And he lit up a smoke and said, "Bang Bang Bang Blam!
Boom Boom Boom, Thoom Thoom Thoom, Creak Creak Creak Klik Klak Slam!"
And the ceiling came loose, and the floor fell away—
Viktor Davis's head swelled five sizes that day!
But he sat in his chair and he yelled to the crowd,
"I can do what I want!" and he yelled it quite loud.
"Gracious Tarim!" he screamed, "King whose wrath all men fear!"
And he held up a perfectly pure golden sphere
And he rose through the air in his astronaut suit
That was made from the gold he'd had Cerebus loot,
And we heard him exclaim as he vanished from view,
"One last message: You're welcome, and also — Screw You!"

Oh, and, Gerhard: You're awesome. Dave's cover ad on 190 was a transparent ploy fueled by petty jealousy over the way you draw star fields.

Sort of Sincerely,

Michael A. Gelman

It's not true. I care about you guys at least as much as I care about anyone else in my life that I see for three or four minutes once every five or six years. At LEAST as much. Every one of you. Alan Moore (in my opinion) is a brilliant writer with a very original mind, of which he takes great, if not full (you'd have to ask him, wouldn't you?) advantage. He's a fascinating dinner companion and I regret that I don't talk to him nearly as often as I could. I'm not sure if I'd describe your poem as uncomfortable, ultimately beguiling OR mind-expanding, but I did like it better than the Hemingway job that Michael Mooney sent in.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dave;

I've been trying to write you a long letter for months now to respond to *Cerebus* 186, but it's a futile attempt. There really is no point in countering all your statements -- you've stacked the deck against anyone who disagrees. We're all just co-opted (or pussy-whipped) in your view. I'm sad to see you promote this silly way of thinking, but mostly I'm sad to see how shallow and simplistic your outlook on the sexes is. I'm sorry to say it, Dave, but I think you're a jerk... and a fool too.

Seth

Seth is the writer-artist of *Palooka-ville*, an innovative and refreshing autobiographical book which is the first to bring the *New Yorker* style of cartooning to the comic-book page, published by Drawn & Quarterly. Highly recommended.

Okay. Pussy-whipped. Now there's a can of worms for you. It's a subject that is very much on the minds of the women I talk with (I know it comes as an enormous shock to you, Seth, that women do, indeed, talk with me). Being pussy-whipped is a lot more the fault of men than it is of women. What a number of women have woken up to is that their boyfriends and husbands never disagree with them. Since they know that I will give them my honest opinion if they ask me for it, the topic has become a re-curring theme in recent years although the implicit tone accompanying it has shifted. For a vast majority of women the issue is a basic one: 'if he lets me push him around, it's his fault.' Most of them test the boundaries of what they can get away with (particularly the young ones, who are new at the game) much as they did with their fathers when they were growing up. Of course this falls into the category of 'you can get what you want and still not be

very happy'. They know (most of them — some, I'll grant you, don't even suspect) when they are making unreasonable demands, intentionally slapping a guy in the face (metaphorically or in actuality). Pussy-whipped guys have basically adapted the traditional female role for their own: peace at any price, roll with the punches (metaphorically or in actuality), be understanding, be submissive, be whatever you have to be to keep the relationship intact. This does not work over any extended period of time. One of the highest accolades a woman can bestow upon a man is 'he's a real challenge'. The male world has become very unchallenging for women. Strong people admire strength and deplore weakness. The mistake that pussy-whipped men make is in thinking that strength involves 'slapping her around' or 'being macho'. That's not the kind of strength that I'm talking about; strength involves standing your ground in an argument, holding to a contrary opinion if you believe in that opinion, setting boundaries to your own behaviour which are reasonable to you and having inviolable lines drawn in the sand of behaviour you will accept in a girlfriend or lover. One of the easiest of the glib defenses of the pussy-whipped male is that 'it really doesn't make a difference to me.' Whatever makes her happy makes me happy. If this is the centerpiece of your thinking when it comes to making mutual decisions in a relationship, you have already taken the first step on the road to dissolution. If she makes all the choices, great and small, of what the two of you do or don't do, you really are little more than a housepet. If it REALLY doesn't make a difference to you whether the two of you do 'a' or 'b', it's a good policy to make sure that at least half the time you are the one to make the arbitrary choice... and make it stick. If she says 'do you want to do x or y' and you say 'x', and she says 'let's do y' and you say 'whatever you want, it really doesn't matter to me', you have failed a very simple test. Someone who evinces no outward sign of having free will is an impossible person to respect. If a woman doesn't respect you, she doesn't love you. You might be a comfortable companion at that point, a whipping boy, a housepet or a surrogate son, but you are clearly not a lover in the female sense of the word. Women, whether consciously or unconsciously, are looking for a long-term scenario — 'commitment' is a camouflage for the actual goal: finding someone who remains interesting to them, who is his own person and who is aware enough to know when his psychic territory is being infiltrated or devoured. There is no greater status for women among their peers than to have a long-term relationship with a guy who — even after months or years — still has his own opinions, has his own house in order, who controls himself and stands his ground without abusing her mentally or physically. One of the commonest complaints of pussy-whipped males (or, even more deplorable, males who ASPIRE to being pussy-whipped) is that the best women pine after men who are uncaring, unfaithful and brutal. See, those guys are the longed-for 'challenge'. Implicit in this is the obvious tendency to excess. There are 'challenges' and there are 'impossibles'. Since it has become rarer and rarer for women to find men who will set any limits or boundaries on behaviour they will tolerate, who might well stand their ground and disagree even on the most cursory level, a man (as opposed to a male) is going to look pretty attractive. He passes all the tests when it comes to resisting her manipulations, and so earns her respect and interest. In the interests of achieving one of the 'impossibles' (so to speak), she becomes penis-whipped — setting no limits on the boundaries of behaviour she will tolerate.

Seth, I have no idea what your life situation is like, so I can't comment on whether I think you have been co-opted or if you are pussy-whipped. I certainly don't think that all men have been co-opted or are pussy-whipped but, from my experience, most are. We return to percentages. From the vantage point of what I would view as pussy-whipped males, the world is moving gradually in the direction of balanced relationships between men and women where gender becomes meaningless; boy-friends with many feminine traits, girlfriends with many masculine traits; the more feminine traits a male has the better a male he is, the more masculine traits a female has the better a female she is. This philosophy enters the whirlpool at the center where traits are no longer described as masculine or feminine — we're all just people, indistinguishable from one another and some manner of paradise beckons at the end of the road.

I think that view is full of shit.

1996 CEREBUS WORLD TOUR

AUSTRALIA
FEBRUARY 1996

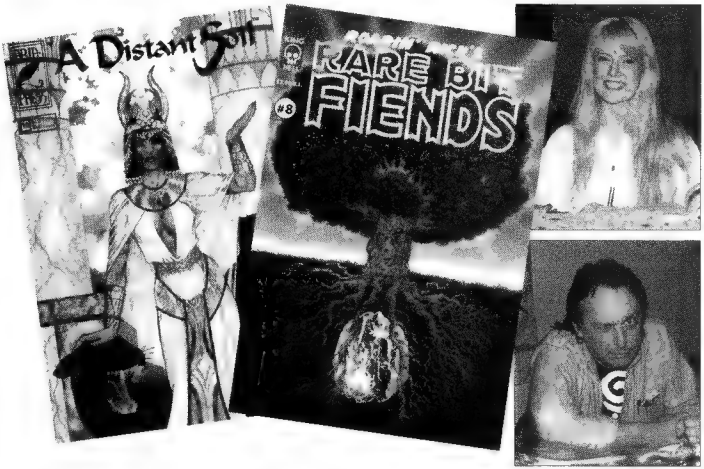
•

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BACCHUS TOUR

The God of Wine turns 4,000 years old! Join Eddie Campbell, Dave Sim and Gerhard for the Celebration at OZ CON... and beyond!

ALSO:

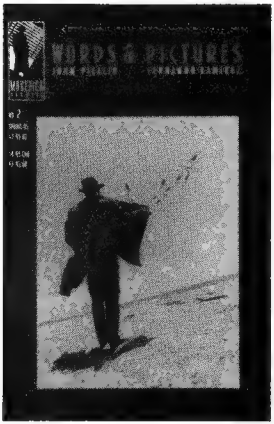
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
FRANCE
ENGLAND
GERMANY
AND MORE



A DISTANT SOIL 10 AND RARE BIT FIENDS 8 DEBUT at Austin/Spirits. 'Nyah nyah, Rick' gloats self-publishing's blonde bombshell, 'I made it to issue ten before yoooo did.' 'Argh' says the Veitchmonster. 'Must draw… faster. Mustn't… black… out.'

A DISTANT SOIL, Aria Press, 12638-28 Jefferson Ave. Suite 173, Newport News, VA 23602-4316.
RARE BIT FIENDS, King Hell Press, P.O. Box 1371, West Townshend, VT 05359-1371.

'MAN, IF I HAD TEN ISSUES to autograph I think my right hand would fall off,' moans the otherwise imperturbable Terry Moore of mega-hit STRANGERS IN PARADISE, Abstract Studio, P.O. Box 271487, Houston, TX 77277. FAX (713) 666-0238

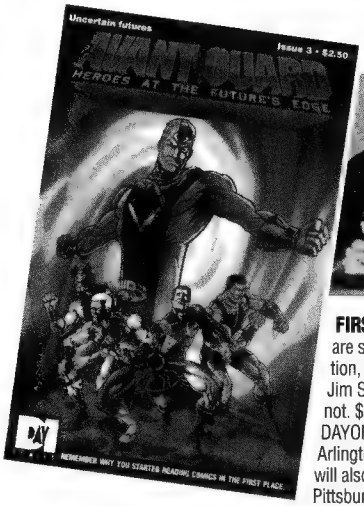


RAVE REVIEWS for the second issue of John Picacio and Fernando Ramirez's WORDS & PICTURES $3.95 US and $4.95 CAN. from Maverick Studios, 5601 Bandera Rd. Suite 479, San Antonio, TX 78238.

WRENSTAR BOOK ONE by Mike Hayden. A project he has been developing for twelve years. It's a long, long graphic novel and he intends to stick to a bi-monthly schedule as finances allow. $2.50 US and $3.00 CAN. from SUN & MOON PRESS, 1201 Broadmoor #141, Austin, TX 78723.

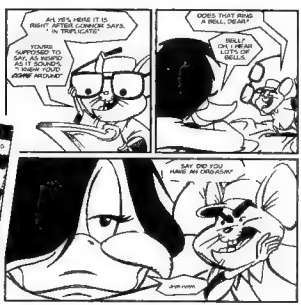
Mike Hayden and letterer Thao Huang.

SCOTT DESCHAINE, writer and publisher of DISCOVERY COMICS works with some very talented people, including Bob Hardin (you'll *SWEAR* Jack Davis did it) on BLARNEY ($2.95 US) and Lynette Weisberg on A BUG'S GIFT ($1.95 US) DISCOVERY COMICS, P.O. Box 1863 Austin, TX 78767. FAX (512) 441-4611



Stephen Conley.

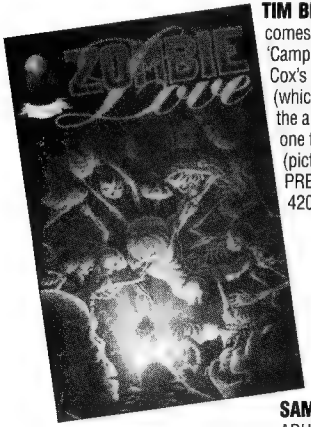
FIRST PRINTINGS of AVANT GUARD 1, 2 and 3 are still available. I am, by no stretch of the imagination, a super-hero fan, but Conley's in a league with Jim Steranko (in his prime) with this series. I kid you not. $3.00 US and $4.00 CAN. + $1.00 postage from DAYONE COMICS, 1021 Arlington Blvd., Suite 912E Arlington, VA. Internet: SConley@ao1.com. Stephen will also be in Columbus, Manchester, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Phoenix and Kansas City.


AH, YES, HERE IT IS. RIGHT AFTER COMMON SAYS, "IN TRIPLICATE"
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO SAY, AS INSERT AS IT SOUNDS, "I KNOW YOUR ASSHAT AROUND."
DOES THAT RING A BELL, DEAR?
BELL? OH, I HEAR LOTS OF BELLS.
SAY, DID YOU HAVE AN ORGASM?
SIGH

FILTHY ANIMALS pencil art from an ashcan for a proposed 4-issue mini-series about cartoon characters who make 'Poons' (pornographic cartoons). Demented? You bet. Ashcan (limited to 500) available for $4.00 (plus age statement) from K.S. Wilson, P.O. Box 160962, Austin, TX.

WONDERFUL mini someone left at the table when I stepped out for a moment. No address (sorry) but I really liked it.

(sorry I didn't have room to cover everyone who was at Spirits/Austin. Thanks to John Christian and his 'Spirits Volunteer Army', all of the exhibitors and attendees. On to Columbus!)



TIM BIERONSKI, a high school friend of Gerhard's who comes over every Monday to shoot pool with us out back at 'Camp David' is mad for only ONE COMIC BOOK — Jeremy Cox's ZOMBIE LOVE. Ger got Jeremy to sign one for Tim (which meant we had to give Tim our copy so he could keep the autographed one in mint in a plastic bag and still have one to read). ZOMBIE LOVE 1 and 2 (2nd printings) 3, 4, 5 (pictured) are available for $3.50 US ea. from ZUZUPETAL PRESS, P.O. Box 3986, Chula Vista, CA 91909 or call (619) 420-6382 to place a phone order.

SAM HURT'S EYEBEAM 1, 2 and 3 are available from ADHESIVE COMICS, Box 5372, Austin, TX 78763-5372. $3.00 US ea. (postage included). You can also order his trade paperbacks 'Teetering on the Brink' and 'Render Unto Peaches' ($9.00 ea.) from Studio Eyebeam, 1209 Newning Ave., Austin, TX 78704.

Eyebeam
THE TRILOGY
COMICS
$3.00
YOU KNOW, WHEN IT RUBS HAS BEEN A WHILE AND THE LAST TIME WAS YOU YOU COULD A LITTLE RUN DOWN
BUT NOW, YOU HAVE A REALLY NEAT TAN GOU YOU LOOK MAGNUM AND ROBUST HECK YOU LOOK ALMOST GOD-LIKE!
YOU THINK SO? AW, SO I'VE BEEN GOING TO A TANNING SALON
THANK!
THE SELF-IMAGE WAS GROWN, EYEBEAM, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT MY DISTANCE NOT NATURAL. THEREFORE MUST BE SUPERNATURAL. THEREFORE I MUST BE DYING.
NO WAY! FOR ONE THING YOU HAVE A BACKGROUND IN POLITICS. IT'S SUPPOSED TO GO THE OTHER WAY.
IN THE OTHER HAND, YOU'RE NEVER AROUND WHEN I NEED YOU - AND YOU DO BASEBALL CLICHÉS ELEMENTS FROM A VARIETY OF CULTURES AND TIPS. TOTEMS GARGOYLES ANCIENT MONSTER AND CREATIVE DRAWING.
BUT YOU DRINK? NOT ONLY?
IT'S COMPROMISE CAN I BE TEN MINUTES?
DON'T KNOW. LET ME CHECK A DICTIONARY.
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN HURT OR INSULTED - YOU MAN HAVE MONEY COMING AND NOT KNOW IT. HELLO, I'M HAMILTON. GOODBYE TO
AT PRICE AND DISCOUNT YOUR INITIAL CONSULTATION IS FREE - AND YOU PAY ONLY IF YOU WIN.
AT HAMILL AND HATTERSON, WE'RE STILL SUING PEOPLE FOR THE DEATH OF OUR FOUNDER, MR. HAMILL - DEFENSE COUNSEL DRAW.
IF YOU SUE NOW, DURING OUR COMPASSION SKILL CREATIVE PERSON WILL GIVE YOU TIME ENDORSE FOR THE PRICE OF ONE
IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME

AND, ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER (unless they missed the deadline again) Bill Willingham's brilliant Comics Journal cover (which was a real Austin 'show-stopper'). Who's next? Only Gary and Bill know for sure. (oops, sorry, Bill. It wasn't nasty enough so they went with the Jeff Wong 'nazi shot' instead. I *think* that's your cover on the order blank. Ah, fame)

'WE DID IT!'

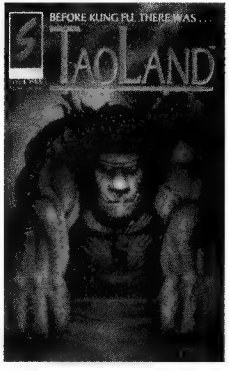
Veteran self-publisher Martin Wagner got to see all of his hard work as local liaison pay off…

'FEED YOUR HEAD'

The poster designed by Martin with which he wall papered most of the high-energy college town.

AN 8-PAGE $1.50

comic was one of the 'big hits' at the show Jeff Amano's TAOLAND is available from him at SUMITEK, P.O. Box 116961, Carrollton, TX 75011.



SSCC!
THE SOUTHWEST SOCIETY OF COMIC CREATORS

NEWSLETTER
P. O. BOX 821143
DALLAS, TEXAS 75382-1143

We all have those comic books which are near and dear to us. For some, it requires the patience of Job to remain faithful, they come out so infrequently. The stories are read and the artwork admired with the greatest restraint — 'careful now, not too fast, Dave, you mightn't see another one for... shit. It's over.' It's hard to say if Eddie Campbell's *Bacchus* is in that category. There are so many pages of Bacchus stories in existence (well over seven hundred) and I know I've read every one of them. Still, the doubt lingers. Could I have missed one along the way? When was the last one that I read published? Yeah? Am I sure about that? It's so hard to tell anything beyond the fact that Gods Walk the Earth.

Did Bacchus just take Eddie's fancy one day? Or did Bacchus take a fancy to Eddie? It stands to reason. All this talk of comic-book icons, new mythological figures, super-heroes as twentieth-century manifestations of the infinite human capacity for heroic fiction. If gods do exist and they were to cast a critical eye at us wee-words-'n'-pictures folks, it's hard to imagine anything catching their attention or flattering their sensibilities at, say, the San Diego Con. One might just as well scrutinize a wallful of crayon renderings by first-graders looking for a good likeness of a mum or dad. But Bacchus - Eddie's Bacchus - is a different fella altogether. Look, he might've said in the general vicinity of the hoity-toities of Olympus, the jig is up. We're getting long in the tooth. We can't cut the mustard anymore. Instead of always making out that we're better than everyone, let's just face the music. He probably lost his train of thought, which was all right; no one was listening anyway.

Show 'em, he might've said to Eddie. That's really all he had to say. He showed it to Eddie and Eddie shows it to us. He showed it to Eddie and filled Eddie so full that it would take five lifetimes to put it all down on paper even if every page were covered with little Alan Moore panels

A harmless distraction, comic books. Go wherever the comic-book people go and one thing is certain: you can always get a seat at the hotel bar. Bacchus probably has a weakness for hotel bars for those cold, impersonal moods when you just want to watch the parade go by.

A lot of us took to old Bacchus. A handful at first (even today, most comic-book conventions look like Christian Temperance Union meetings), but always someone (usually Diana — I'm sure the irony isn't lost on the God of Wine) was in a key spot to make sure the next tale appeared somewhere. And Bacchus would sit in a concealed corner of a hotel bar and listen to the comic-book fans talking about the New Gods and the penciller Gods and the inker Gods and (the ones dressed in black) about universal icons and Eternal Heroic Myths as they hurried past. Bacchus would just sip his drink, and even if you were sitting in his lap you wouldn't see his expression change. He'd be a good lad in a poker game, old Bacchus.

How many of us are there? I wonder. Tom Fassbender at Capital is one. We cackled gleefully over the phone at one another when Eddie's solicitation came in for the first issue. All the old stories are going to see the light of day again. New ones, too. How do you feel about that, eh, Bacchus? Do you care? Are you excited? Are you disgusted because barroom tales should be left in peace? What about self-publishing? Isn't it great that Eddie's self-publishing the stories — keeping them in print? All those great wrinkles don't even twitch. Deadface they call 'im.

I did a sketch of Bacchus once. Someone in a bar at a con after I'd had a few (well, all right, more than a few) asked if I'd do him a Bacchus 'some day' — he collected 'em, see? Pictures of old Bacchus by other artists. I told him (I didn't ask him, I TOLD him) to get me a piece of art paper, a pencil, an eraser, a thin black pen and a thick black pen, and a picture for reference. Most fun I've had in a bar at a con ever — and that's saying something. It wasn't until I did that sketch that I realised just how inspired, how magical, how hypnotising and exhilarating a creation — ahem, a 'creation' — he is.

Of course, if it's the other way 'round, and Eddie Campbell is Bacchus' creation, you have only to look at Eddie's body of work to realise that the same holds true — inspired, magical, hypnotising and exhilarating

Cheers, mate... and — uh — cheers, Mate.

Single copies and subscriptions available from Eddie Campbell c/o Andrew Horton, 10 Amherst Drive, Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706. Oh hell, just send 'im lots of money and he'll send you lots of *Bacchus*

HERE'S THE WAY NEIL GAIMAN DESCRIBED IT:

"Within these pages you'll find the old mythology and the new..."

Eddie Campbell's BACCHUS

HEY! DID YOU KNOW...
..THAT 80 PER CENT OF ALL HOUSEHOLD DUST IS ACTUALLY DEAD HUMAN SKIN?!
TV
IT'S TRUE... I HEARD IT ON THE T.V.
LOOK, GETTING BACK TO WHAT YOU WERE SAYING...
YEH.. I'M THE GOD BACCHUS.
SHOULDN'T YOU BE ETERNALLY YOUNG, WITH BRONZED SKIN SMOOTH AS MARBLE?
IMMORTALITY ISN'T FOREVER.

"The Eyeball Kid and the Stygian Leech rub shoulders with older gods and heroes"

AND AS FOR THE STYGIAN LEECH..!? NOW HAS THE GREAT POWER OF THE GOD ZEUS..
..WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY IN THE HANDS OF THE EYEBALL KID. AND OF COURSE WAS NOT REALLY HIS TO KEEP.
BUT WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US, CHRYSON?
WHY, WE HAVE THE LEECH!
SOMEHOW IT'S NOT ALL QUITE WHAT I EXPECTED, CHRYSON..
WE JUST HAVE TO NEGOTIATE SOME OF THE FINER POINTS - THAT'S ALL.
UP
UP

"DEADFACE mixes air hijacks

and ancient gods ...

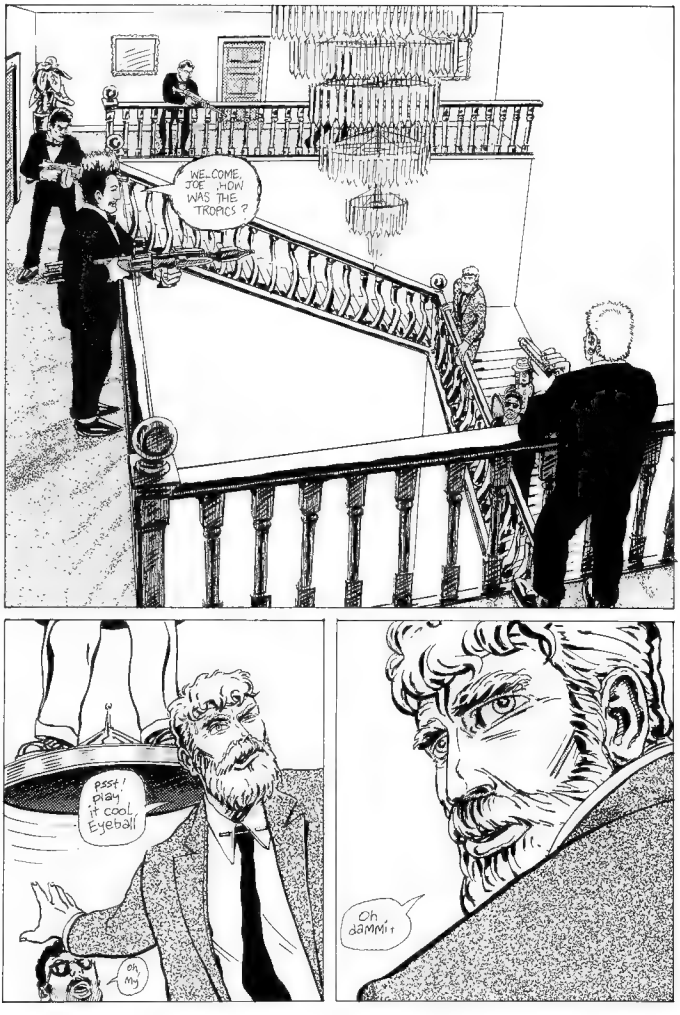
ZEUS RETURNED TO TAKE VENGEANCE ON HIS FATHER. AS A YOUNGSTER HE BECAME A GOPHER IN THE FAMILY FIRM -

HE WORKED HIS WAY UP TO THE POSITION OF PERSON FRIDAY TO THE CHIEF HIMSELF.

AND WAS ON HAND TO STOP CRONOS FROM DEVOURING HIS LATEST SON, HADES -

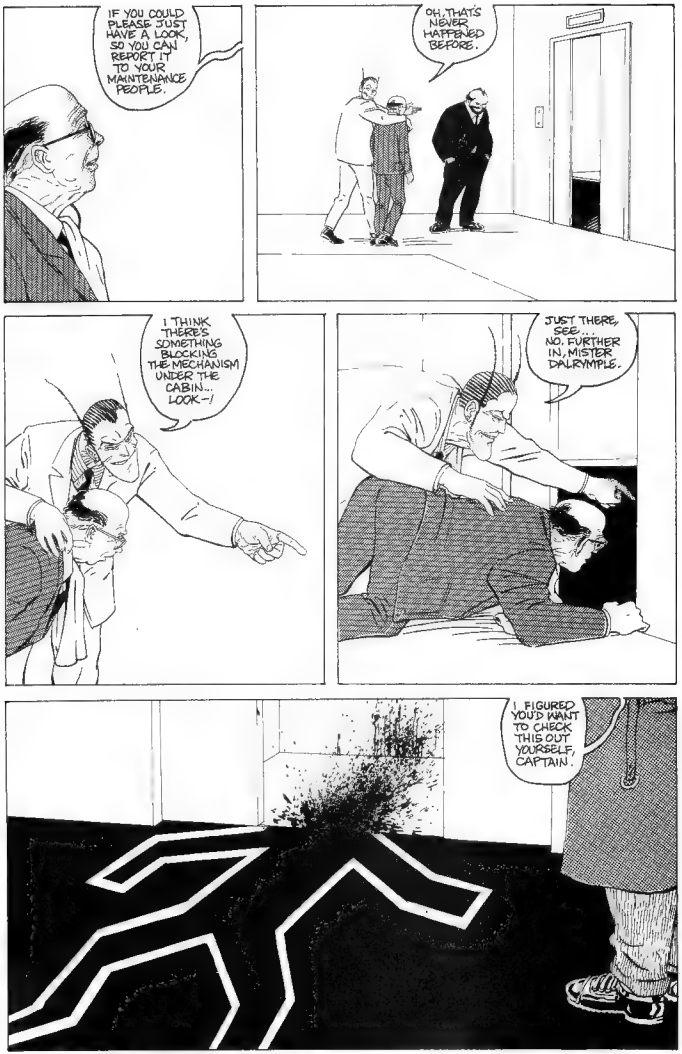
WELL, OF COURSE, WAR BROKE OUT. CRONOS WAS PAST HIS PRIME, SO THE TITAN ATLAS STOOD IN FOR THE BOSS, AND ON THE OTHER SIDE ZEUS WAS ABLE TO ENLIST THE AID OF ALL THOSE SONS OF MOTHER EARTH, IN THE AMALGAMATED UNION OF CYCLOPES AND HUNDRED-HANDED GIANTS -

"... gangland drama ...

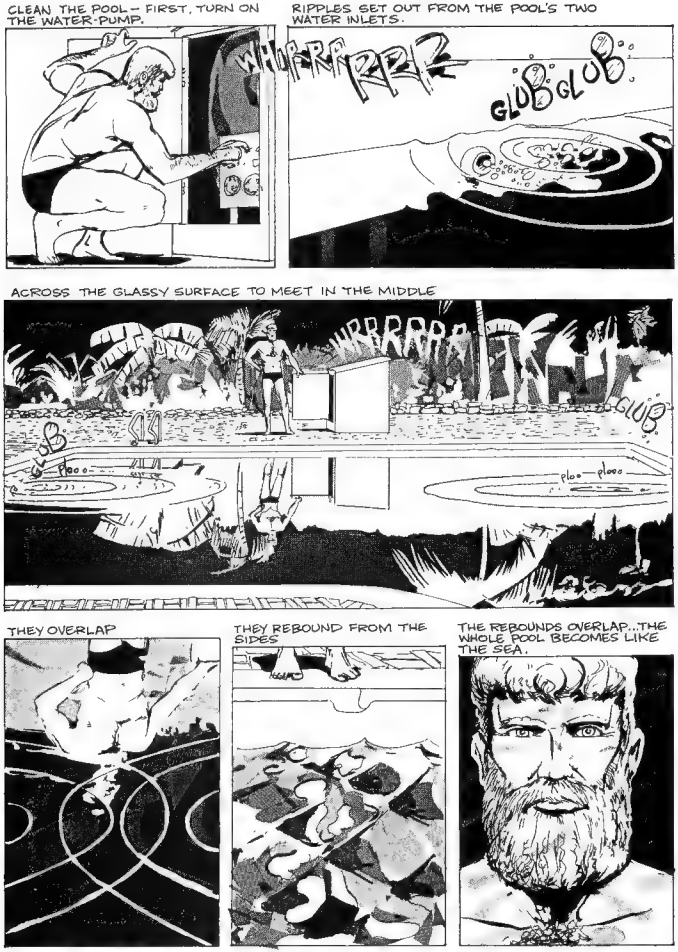


HERAKLES..THE GREAT HERAKLES..WOULD NOT LET ME PASS..I HAD NO CONTROL OVER THE AWESOME FIRE AT THAT TIME...
GO BACK!
I KILLED HERAKLES.. DAMN ME!!
I KILLED APOLLO
No!
I KILLED ARES
NOOOOOO
OH,WOE!
MY POWER CRACKLED AROUND THE PEAKS, TOTTERING THE TOWERS OF OLYMPIAN GRANDNESS
stop!

"...police procedural and mythic fantasy..."


IF YOU COULD PLEASE JUST HAVE A LOOK, SO YOU CAN REPORT IT TO YOUR MAINTENANCE PEOPLE.
OH. THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE.
I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING BLOCKING THE MECHANISM UNDER THE CABIN... LOOK--!
JUST THERE, SEE... NO. FURTHER IN, MISTER DALRYMPLE.
I FIGURED YOU'D WANT TO CHECK THIS OUT YOURSELF, CAPTAIN.

"...swimming pool cleaners and classics. It shouldn't work, of course, and it works like a charm."


CLEAN THE POOL – FIRST, TURN ON THE WATER-PUMP.
RIPPLES SET OUT FROM THE POOL'S TWO WATER INLETS.
WHIRR RRR
GLUB GLUB
ACROSS THE GLASSY SURFACE TO MEET IN THE MIDDLE
IRRRRRR
GLUB
GLUB
ploo
ploo
THEY OVERLAP
THEY REBOUND FROM THE SIDES
THE REBOUNDS OVERLAP..THE WHOLE POOL BECOMES LIKE THE SEA.

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, INC.

9 March 95

Dear Cerebus Reader:

The BULLETINS page will return next issue. Although it is still too early to say for certain, it would appear that there is a break in the storm clouds over the direct market. The Marvel Entertainment Group has 'left the building' to set up alternative means of distribution more suited to their long-range goal of becoming a major entertainment empire 'player'

It is hoped that by the time you read this all participants in the direct market have thought better of plans for exclusive distribution deals and that the 'Unproofed' piece on the inside front cover is now little more than an artifact of a Very Strange Two Weeks.

Let me just say for the record that Ger and I are in complete agreement that CEREBUS will never again be sold exclusively to one distributor. There is no incentive large enough to outweigh the advantages of a level playing field and an open marketplace. We sell the monthly title and the CEREBUS 'phone books' to all distributors at the same discount and with the same trade terms.

Come what may we certainly hope that all of the distributors currently supplying CEREBUS to comic book stores around the world are still doing so when issue 300 rolls off the presses at Preney in March of 2004. And we look forward to dealing with any new addition to this highly competitive branch of the direct market this year and in the years to come.

With fingers crossed I remain

Yrs. sincerely,

Dave Sim

BOX 1674 STATION 'C' KITCHENER ONTARIO N2G 4R2

DAVE SIM:
CREATIVE VISIONARY OR MISOGYNIST CRACKPOT?

Find out the answer, or as close as we could come, in the latest issue of The Comics Journal, which features a special section devoted to Dave Sim's misogynistic screed, "Reads," in Cerebus #186. Included are:

- A journalistic account of just why his fellow cartoonists neither cared nor even noticed what one reader astutely referred to (and is now being promoted) as "the Mein Kampf of misogyny." We interview **Alan Moore**, **Neil Gaiman**, **Trina Robbins**, **Diana Schutz**, **Kate Worley**, **Gilbert Hernandez**, **Martin Wagner**, **Gerhard**, **Colleen Doran**, **Roberta Gregory**, **Peter Bagge**, **Seth**, and others. Find out who thought it was "very interesting," who had "pity...for anyone who holds these views," and who dropped out of the World Tour because he couldn't stomach Sim's views toward women.
- A refutation by the *Journal*'s token feminist, **Anne Rubinstein**.
- An interview with the former Mrs. Viktor Davis, **Deni Loubert**, who offers a, well, unique perspective on the genius behind Cerebus and his understanding of women.

The *Journal* also occasionally covers topics besides **Dave Sim**: this issue, for example, also features the longest interview with legendary fantasy painter **Frank Frazetta** ever published. Previous issues have featured interviews with **Jeff Smith**, **Neil Gaiman**, **Jim Woodring**, **Joe Kubert**, **Burne Hogarth**, and future issues feature **S. Clay Wilson**, **Rick Veitch**, **Grant Morrison**, **Scott McCloud**, the **Hernandez Brothers**, maybe even **Dave Sim** if he's feeling up to the challenge.

We also happen to be the only magazine about comics that doesn't pass off re-written press releases as news or publish chickenshit fanboy reviews that serve as graft in exchange for advertising revenue. We publish the profession's only investigative journalism and the most exacting criticism anywhere. We are the magazine for comics readers who want to think, which accounts for our low circulation. "Better than *Cerebus*," said **Dave Sim** about the *Journal*. (Actually, he didn't say that at all. But, **Harlan Ellison** did say the *Journal* is "an exciting, controversial, muckraking journal in the time-honored tradition of adversarial journalism." Admittedly, he said this before he hated our guts for raking a little of his muck, but it's still true.)

■ Here's $6.95; send me the Sim issue of the *Journal*.

■ Here's $22 for a 6-issue sub beginning with the Sim issue. I trust every issue will be equally brilliant.

Or call our 800 number and order a subscription with your handy dandy Visa or Master card:
1-800-657-1100.

name _____

address _____

city _____ state ____ zip _____

Mail to: Comics Journal Subscriptions
7563 Lake City Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY WAS SAFE

A.P.E. II

A one day exhibit of self-publishers, small publishers and alternative cartoonists.

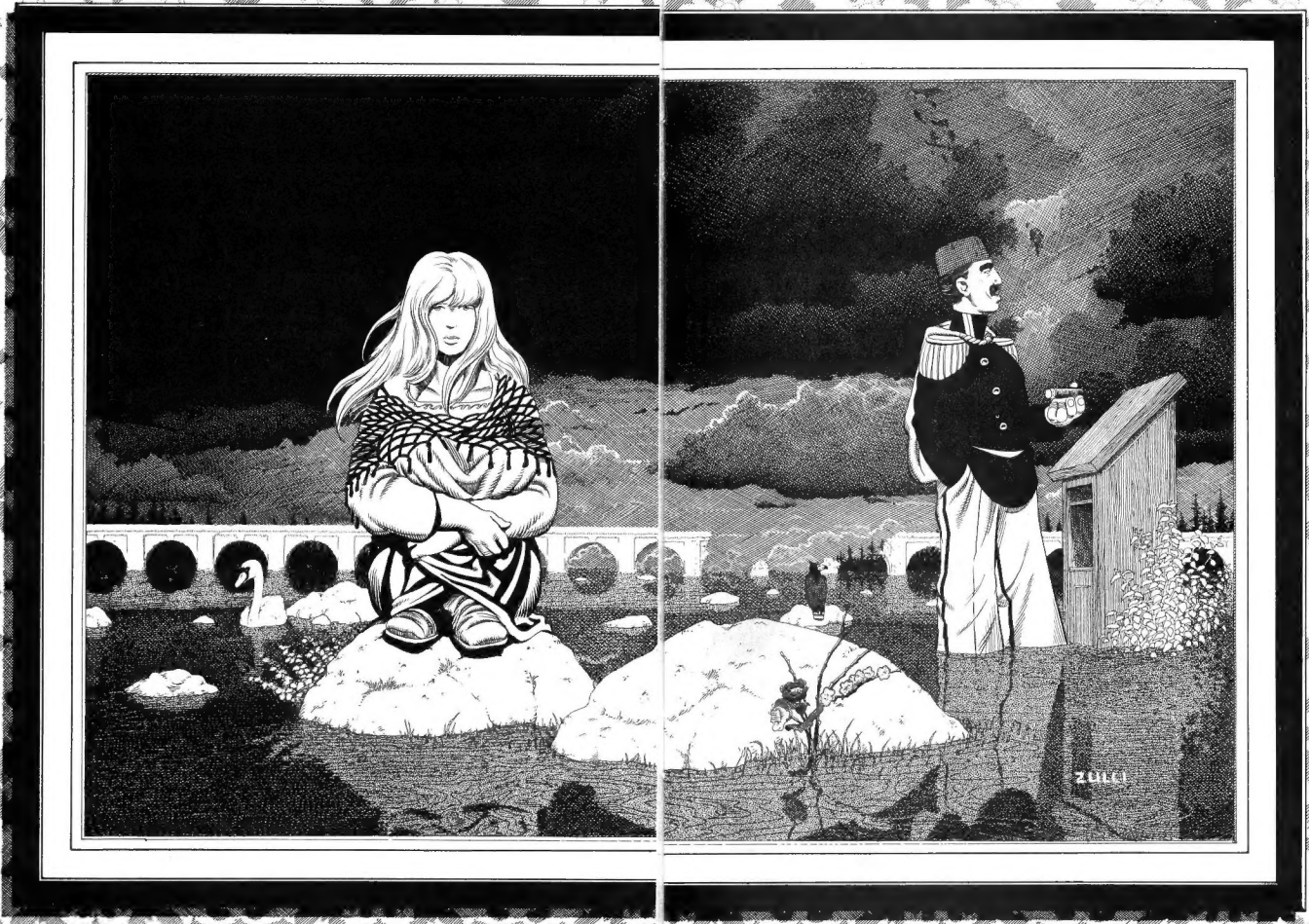
A P E

ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO

1 9 9 5

SUNDAY MAY 14 • San Jose, CA

Call 1-800-866-8929 for details.


ZULLI